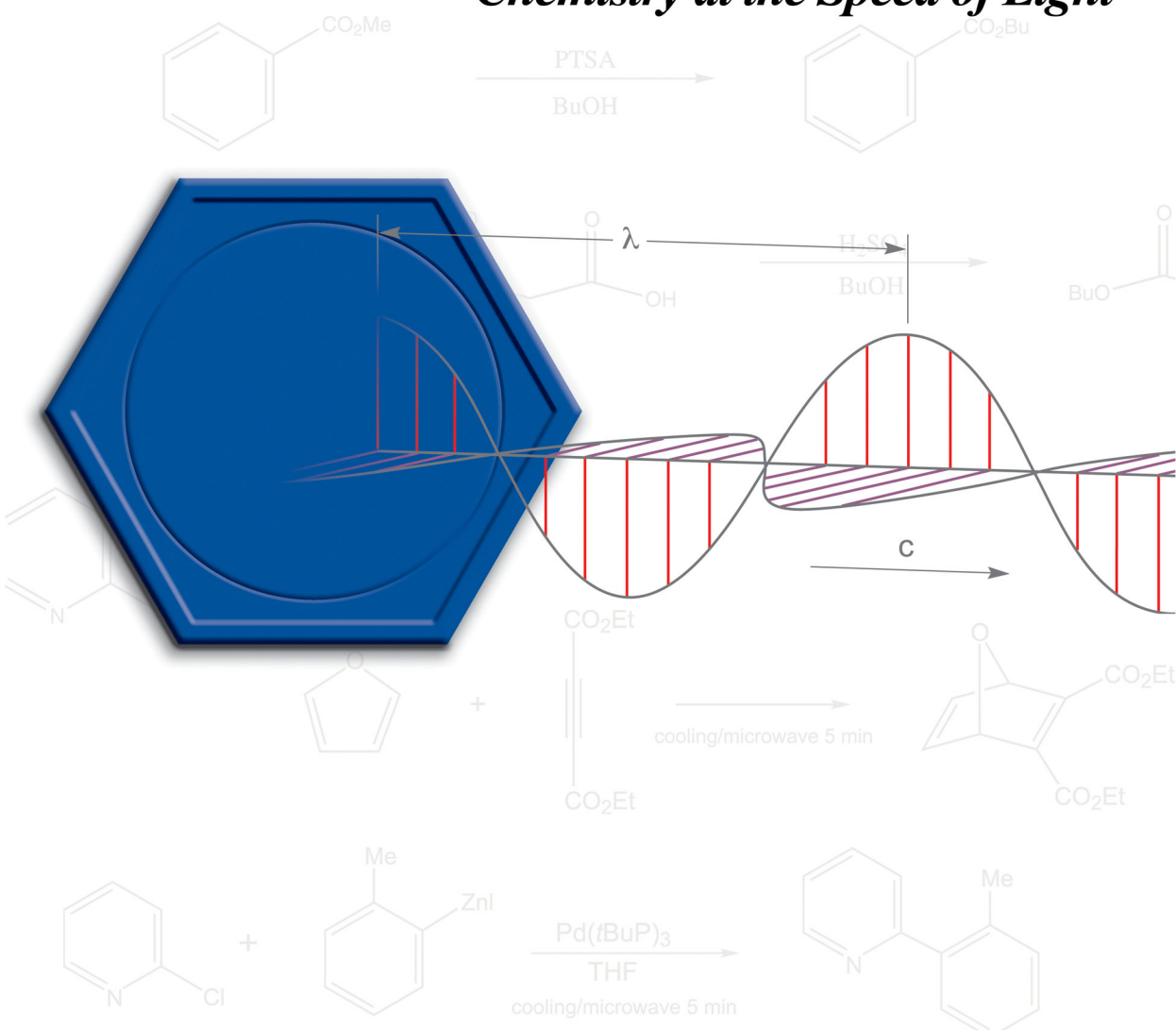


Microwave Synthesis

Chemistry at the Speed of Light



Brittany L. Hayes, Ph.D.



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by Brittany L. Hayes, Ph.D.

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Foreword

By Alan Katritzky, Ph.D.

Virtually all types of thermally driven chemical reactions can be accelerated by microwaves: additions, cycloadditions, substitutions, eliminations, fragmentations...the list goes on. This book, written by a practicing organic chemist for practicing organic chemists, shows how this powerful technique can be applied in laboratory situations. It offers advice on the selection of conditions, solvents, temperatures. It explains the manifold possibilities of modern instrumentation, and provides a powerful tool for the practical application of the technique to enhance the range of synthesis and the productivity of synthetic chemists.

Although microwave-enhanced organic chemistry has been around since the mid-1980s, until recently, it frequently utilized domestic microwave ovens and consequently lacked control and reproducibility, thus for the most part, it was unsafe. Now, in large part due to the development of efficient technology, it is rapidly gaining acceptance and popularity. The number of publications on microwave-assisted organic chemistry is increasing exponentially, as it is being realized that

microwave systems provide the opportunity to complete reactions in minutes, and have manifold applications in academic and industrial environments alike.

With the advent of new single-mode technology at a reasonable cost, together with the simplicity of its use and installation in a normal synthetic laboratory, chemists now have access to greater enhancements, feedback control, and repeatability. Available commercial systems contain temperature and pressure sensors, built-in magnetic stirring, cooling mechanisms, power control, software operation, and even automation. Affordable instruments are safe, reliable, and effective. Microwave instrumentation is as easy to install and operate as a hotplate...place it in a hood, plug it in, and you're on your way.

This book provides an educational tool which can benefit chemists at all levels from graduate students to senior level section leaders with much experience in synthetic chemistry. The well-known ability of microwave energy to increase the internal temperatures of organic substances more rapidly than conventional thermal heat can greatly profit synthetic chemistry. An understanding of the basics of microwave energy can be used in conjunction with general chemical knowledge to enhance synthesis. This book is the first to describe microwave chemistry from the point of view of an organic chemist and it will be much appreciated.

Alan Katritzky, Ph.D.

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Chapter 1

Introduction to Microwave Chemistry

By Michael J. Collins, Ph.D.

Microwave synthesis gives organic chemists more time to expand their scientific creativity, test new theories and develop new processes.

Microwave synthesis represents a major breakthrough in synthetic chemistry methodology, a dramatic change in the way chemical synthesis is performed and in the way it is perceived in the scientific community. Conventional heating, long known to be

inefficient and time-consuming, has been recognized to be creatively limiting as well. Microwave synthesis gives organic chemists more time to expand their scientific creativity, test new theories and develop new processes. Instead of spending hours or even days synthesizing a single compound, chemists can now perform that same reaction in minutes. In concert with a rapidly

expanding applications base, microwave synthesis can be effectively applied to any reaction scheme, creating faster reactions, improving yields, and producing cleaner chemistries.

In addition, microwave synthesis creates completely new possibilities in performing chemical transformations.

Because microwaves can transfer energy directly to the reactive species, so-called “molecular heating”, they can promote transformations that are currently not possible using conventional heat. This is creating a new realm in synthetic organic chemistry.

Microwaves also provide chemists with the option to perform “cool reactions”. Energy is applied directly to the reactants, however. The bulk heating is minimized by use of simultaneous cooling. This allows for enhanced reactions of larger, more heat sensitive molecules (e.g. proteins), as the temperatures are low enough to eliminate thermal degradation. This will provide some exciting new opportunities and an important new tool for proteomics and genomics research.

Recent microwave hardware advancements now provide a range of affordable, flexible tools for the synthetic chemist. This new technology, coupled with the rapidly expanding knowledge and applications base, will cause a major shift towards microwave synthesis in the next few years. As Victor Hugo, the famous French novelist and poet wrote, “An invasion of armies can be resisted, but not an idea whose time has come.” Microwave synthesis is an idea whose time has come and whose impact will be truly monumental on the world of chemistry.

History

The development of microwave technology was stimulated by World War II, when the magnetron was designed to generate fixed frequency microwaves for RADAR devices.^{1,2} Percy LeBaron Spencer of the Raytheon Company accidentally discovered that microwave energy could cook food when a candy bar in his pocket melted while he was experimenting with radar waves. Further investigation showed that microwaves could increase the internal temperature of

foods much quicker than a conventional oven. This ultimately led to the introduction of the first commercial microwave oven for home use in 1954.

Investigation into the industrial applications for microwave energy also began in the 1950s and has continued to the present. Microwave energy has found many uses including irradiating coal to remove sulfur and other pollutants, rubber vulcanization, product drying, moisture and fat analysis of food products, and solvent extraction applications. Wet ashing or digestion procedures for biological and geological samples have also become very important analytical tools. As improvements and simplifications were made in magnetron design, the prices of domestic ovens fell significantly. Consequently, research done in the latter half of the 20th century was performed in modified domestic microwave ovens. The effects of microwave irradiation in organic synthesis were not explored until the mid 1980s. The first two papers on microwave-enhanced organic chemistry were published in 1986 and many organic chemists have since discovered the benefits of using microwave energy to drive synthetic reactions.^{3,4} Until recently, most of this research has been executed in multi-mode domestic microwave ovens, which have proven to be problematic. These ovens are not designed for the rigors of laboratory usage: acids and solvents corrode the interiors quickly; there are no safety controls, temperature or pressure monitoring; and the cavities are not designed to withstand the resulting explosive force from a vessel failure in runaway reactions.

In the 1980s, companies began to address these issues by manufacturing industrial microwave ovens specifically designed for use in laboratories. These multi-mode systems featured corrosion-resistant stainless steel cavities with reinforced doors, temperature and pressure monitoring, and automatic safety controls.

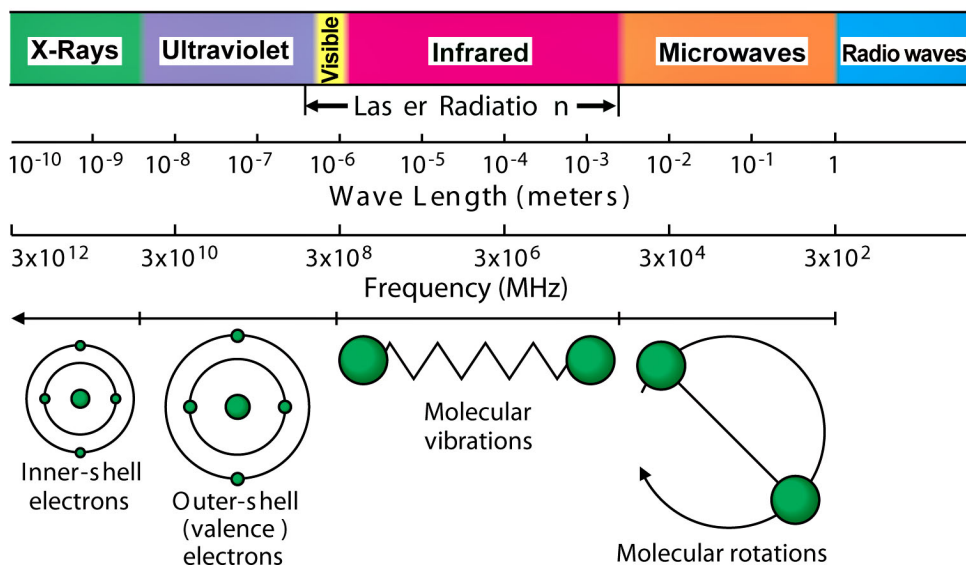
They have worked well for doing large-scale laboratory applications, but they have some fundamental limitations in performing small-scale synthetic chemistry. Recently, single-mode technology, which provides more uniform and concentrated microwave power, has become available. These newer systems represent a breakthrough in providing new capabilities for doing microwave synthesis and are a key factor in the rapid expansion of this field of science.

Microwave Theory

Microwaves are a powerful, reliable energy source that may be adapted to many applications. Understanding the basic theory behind microwaves will provide the organic chemist with the right tools and knowledge to be able to effectively apply microwave energy to any synthetic route.

Figure 1

The electromagnetic spectrum



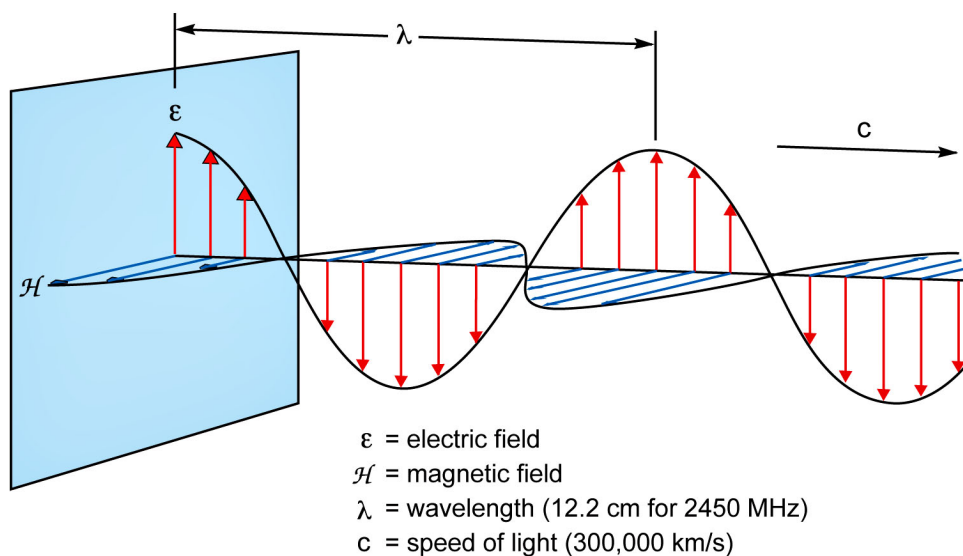
I. What are microwaves?

A **microwave** (Figure 1) is a form of electromagnetic energy that falls at the lower frequency end of the electromagnetic spectrum, and is defined in the 300 to about 300,000 megahertz (MHz) frequency range. Within this region of electromagnetic energy, only molecular rotation is affected, not molecular structure.¹ Out of four available frequencies for industrial, scientific, or medical applications, 2450 MHz is preferred because it has the right penetration depth to interact with laboratory scale samples, and there are power sources available to generate microwaves at this frequency.

Microwave energy (Figure 2) consists of an electric field and a magnetic field, though only the electric field transfers energy to heat a substance.¹ Magnetic field interactions do not normally occur in chemical synthesis.

Figure 2

A microwave



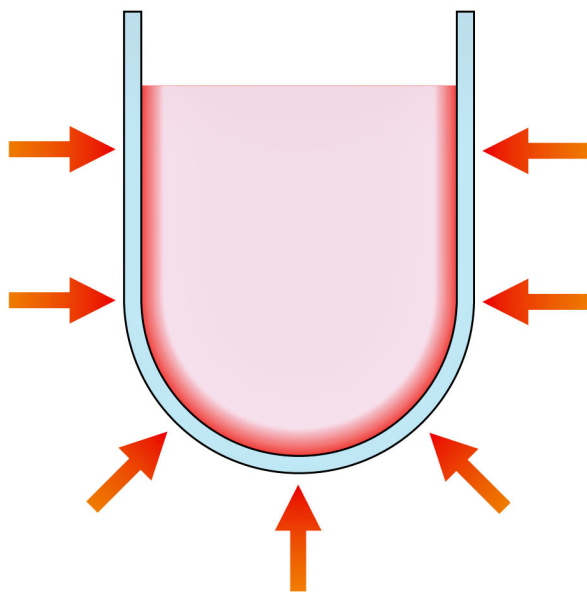
Microwaves move at the speed of light (300,000 km/sec). The energy in microwave photons (0.037 kcal/mole) is very low relative to the typical energy required to cleave molecular bonds (80-120 kcal/mole); thus, microwaves will not affect the structure of an organic molecule. In the excitation of molecules, the effect of microwave absorption is purely kinetic.

II. How does a microwave heat a substance?

Traditionally, chemical synthesis has been achieved through conductive heating with an external heat source. Heat is driven into the substance, passing first through the walls of the vessel in order to reach the solvent and reactants (Figure 3). This is a slow and inefficient method for transferring energy into the system because it depends

Figure 3

Schematic of sample heating by conduction



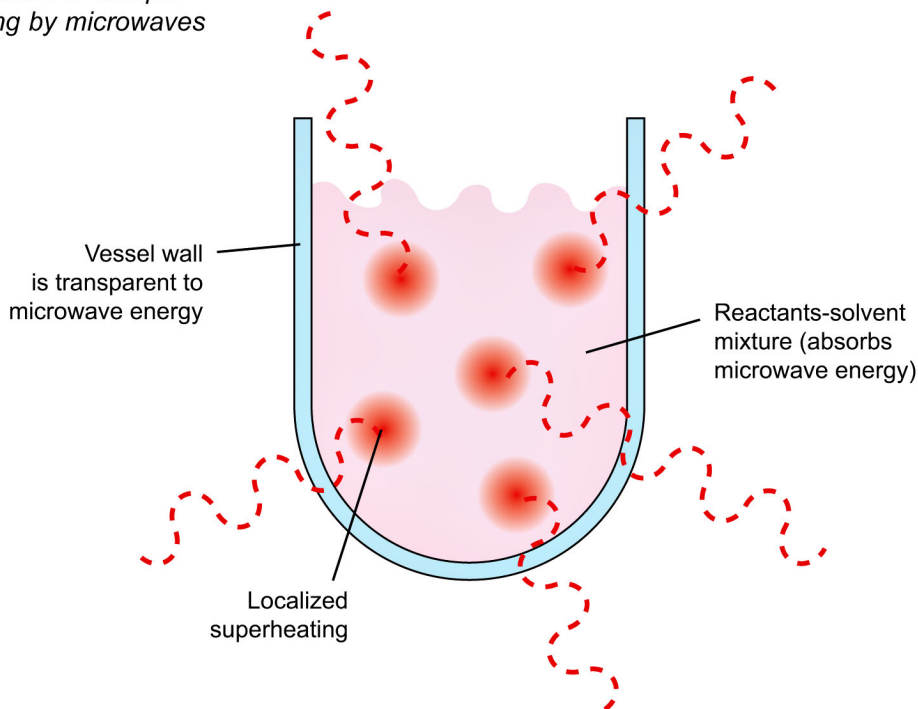
Temperature on the outside surface is greater than the internal temperature.

on the thermal conductivity of the various materials that must be penetrated. It results in the temperature of the vessel being higher than that of the reaction mixture inside until sufficient time has elapsed to allow the container and contents to attain thermal equilibrium. This process can take hours. Conductive heating also hinders the chemist's control over the reaction. The heat source must physically be removed and cooling administered to reduce the internal bulk temperature.

Microwave heating, on the other hand, is a very different process. As shown in Figure 4, the microwaves couple directly with the molecules that are present in the reaction mixture, leading to a rapid rise in temperature. Because the process is not dependent upon the thermal conductivity of the vessel materials, the result

Figure 4

Schematic of sample heating by microwaves



is an instantaneous localized superheating of anything that will react to either **dipole rotation** or **ionic conduction**, the two fundamental mechanisms for transferring energy from microwaves to the substance being heated. Microwave heating also offers facile reaction control. It can be described as “**instant on-instant off**”. When the microwave energy is turned off, latent heat is all that remains.

Dipole rotation is an interaction in which polar molecules try to align themselves with the rapidly changing electric field of the microwave. The rotational motion of the molecule as it tries to orient itself with the field results in a transfer of energy. The coupling ability of this mechanism is related to the polarity of the molecules and their ability to align with the electric field. There are a number of factors that will ultimately determine the dipole rotation coupling efficiency; however, any polar species (solvent and/or substrate) that are present will encounter this mechanism of energy transfer.

The second way to transfer energy is ionic conduction, which results if there are free ions or ionic species present in the substance being heated. The electric field generates ionic motion as the molecules try to orient themselves to the rapidly changing field. This causes the instantaneous superheating previously described. The temperature of the substance also affects ionic conduction: as the temperature increases, the transfer of energy becomes more efficient.

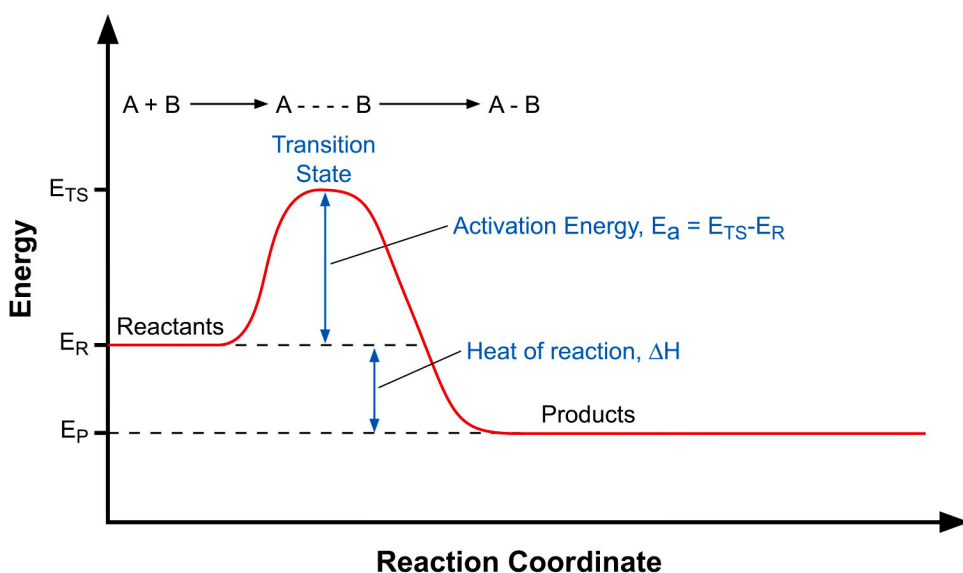
III. How do microwaves increase reaction rates?

In a typical reaction coordinate (Figure 5), the process begins with reactants (A and B), which have a certain energy level (E_R). In order to complete the transformation, these reactants must collide in the correct geometrical orientation to become activated to a higher-level tran-

sition state (E_{TS}). The difference between these energy levels is the activation energy (E_a) required to reach this higher state ($E_{TS} - E_R = E_a$). The activation energy is the energy that the system must absorb from its environment in order to react. Once enough energy is absorbed, the reactants quickly react and return to a lower energy state (E_P) — the products of the reaction (A-B). Microwave irradiation does not affect the activation energy, but provides the momentum to overcome this barrier and complete the reaction more quickly than conventional heating methods.

Figure 5

Reaction coordinate



In general drug discovery and development work, for example, an activation energy value may be 50 kcal/mole. A representative process would involve 30 mg of each reactant, leading to approximately 30 mg of product(s) with an average molecular weight of 300 g/mole (300-350 is characteristic of present drug compounds). According to the calculations in Figure 6, five

calories of energy are required for the full transformation to occur. Commercial microwave hardware available today typically delivers 300 W of power. Translated into calories, this indicates that 72 cal/sec of energy are available from the 300 W of microwave power, assuming a 100% efficiency in microwave heating. Clearly, the amount of microwave energy being introduced to the system is very large relative to the energy needed to achieve the required activation energy. It is this phenomenon that contributes to the increased reaction speeds and higher yields that occur in microwave chemistry.

Figure 6

*Microwave energy vs.
required activation energy*

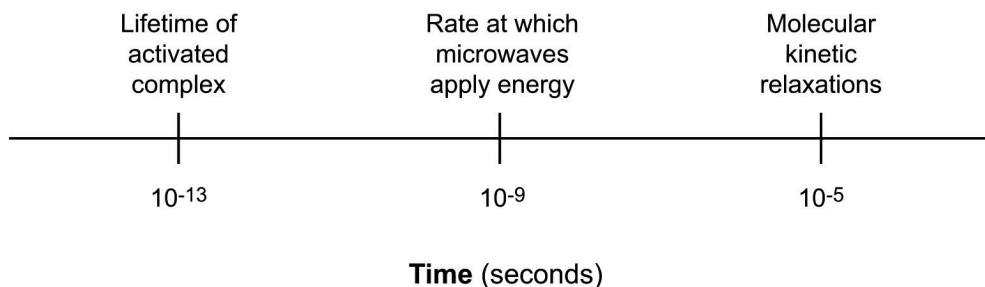
0.03 g	x	$\frac{\text{mol}}{300 \text{ g}}$	x	$\frac{50000 \text{ cal}}{\text{mol}}$	=	5 cal
product		molecular weight		activation energy		
300 W	=	$\frac{300 \text{ J}}{\text{sec}}$	x	$\frac{0.239 \text{ cal}}{\text{J}}$	=	72 cal/sec
microwave energy			conversion factor			

One of the most important aspects of microwave energy is the rate at which it heats (Figure 7). Microwaves will transfer energy in 10^{-9} seconds with each cycle of electromagnetic energy. The kinetic molecular relaxation from this energy is approximately 10^{-5} seconds. This

means that the energy transfers faster than the molecules can relax, which results in the non-equilibrium condition and high instantaneous temperatures that affect the kinetics of the system. This, in turn, enhances the reaction rate, as well as the product yields. In addition, the lifetime of activated complexes are approximately 10^{-13} seconds, and thus, are much shorter lived than the rate at which energy is transferred with microwaves. Activated complexes do not normally exist long enough to have an opportunity to absorb microwave energy. However, there are a number of resonance-stabilized intermediates that are much longer lived. Many of these have lifetimes longer than 10^{-9} seconds, so the opportunity exists in certain chemical reactions, for intermediates generated in this approximate time frame, to couple directly with the microwave and be further enhanced. Most intermediates are highly polar species and many of them are even ionic in character, making them excellent candidates for microwave energy transfer.

Figure 7

Speed of microwave heating



Based on the **Arrhenius reaction rate equation** ($k = Ae^{-E_a/RT}$), the reaction rate constant is dependent on two factors: the frequency of collisions between molecules

that have the correct geometry for a reaction to occur (A) and the fraction of those molecules that have the minimum energy required to overcome the activation energy barrier ($e^{-E_a/RT}$). There has been some speculation that microwaves affect the orientation of the molecular collisions and the activation energy, but there is no evidence that supports either of these ideas.^{5,6} Microwaves do not influence the orientation of those collisions, nor the activation energy. Activation energies remain constant for each particular reaction. However, microwave energy will affect the temperature parameter in this equation. An increase in temperature causes molecules to move about more rapidly, which leads to a greater number of more energetic collisions. This occurs much faster with microwave energy, due to the high instantaneous heating of the substance(s) above the normal bulk temperature, and is the primary factor for the observed rate enhancements.

It should also be obvious that the level of instantaneous heating will be dependent on the amount of microwave energy that is used to irradiate the reactants. The higher the level of microwave energy, the higher the instantaneous temperature will be relative to the bulk temperature. One method for increasing the microwave energy that is delivered is to use simultaneous cooling during the microwave irradiation. This allows a higher level of microwave power to be directly administered, but will prevent overheating by continuously removing latent heat. This technique has proven to be very effective in further enhancing of reaction rates and will be discussed in greater detail throughout the book.

Based on experimental data from numerous works that have been performed over the last ten years, chemists have found that microwave-enhanced chemical

***Arrhenius reaction
rate equation***

$$(k = Ae^{-E_a/RT})$$

reaction rates can be faster than those of conventional heating methods by as much as 1,000-fold.^{3,4,7-15} Assuming the standard first order rate law (rate = $k[A]$), the Arrhenius rate equation ($k = Ae^{-E_a/RT}$) was used to calculate the instantaneous temperatures required to get the reaction enhancements shown in Figure 8. The assumption was a desired reaction bulk temperature of 150 °C and an activation energy of 50 kcal/mole for the transformation. For a 10-fold rate increase, it was determined that a temperature enhancement of only 17 °C would be needed relative to a bulk temperature of 150 °C. Microwave energy can provide that temperature increase instantly. Likewise, for a 100-fold rate increase, the temperature would have to reach 185 °C and would require approximately a 35 °C increase over the bulk temperature. A 1000-fold enhancement would need a 56 °C increase. These instantaneous temperatures are very consistent with the temperatures that would be expected in a microwave system and are directly responsible for the reaction rate and yield enhancements.

Figure 8

*Enhanced
reaction rates*

$$k = Ae^{-E_a/RT}$$

For $T_{bulk} = 150\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$
and
 $E_a = 50\text{ kcal/mol}$
($T_{instantaneous} > T_{bulk}$)

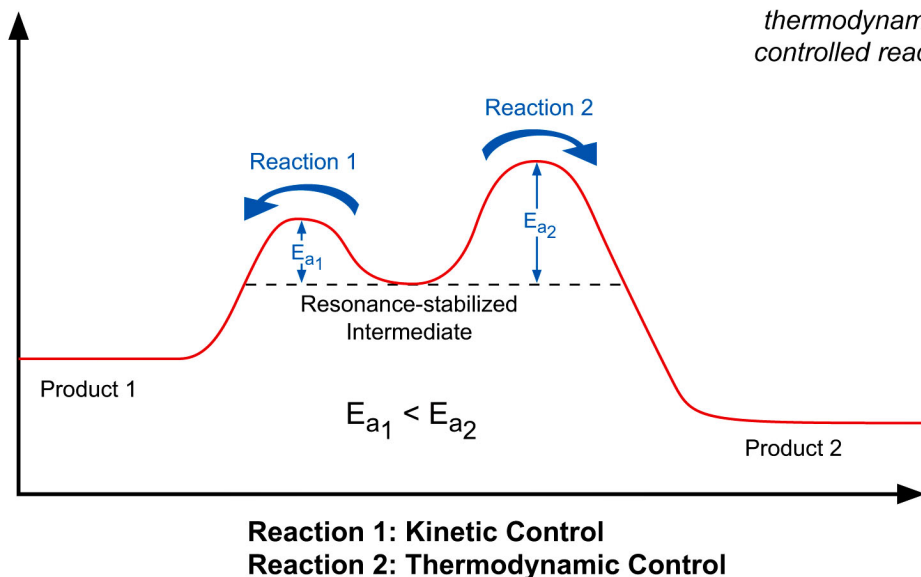
1000 x rate	$T_{instantaneous} = 206\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$
100 x rate	$T_{instantaneous} = 185\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$
10 x rate	$T_{instantaneous} = 167\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$

IV. What types of chemical reactions would be most affected?

There are two main types of chemical reactions, **kinetic** and **thermodynamic** (Figure 9). Chemical reactions driven by conventional heating are more likely to perform under kinetic control (Reaction 1, Figure 9). These reactions usually require only mild conditions. A resonance-stabilized intermediate will take the easiest path — one with the lowest activation energy — to its products. Alternatively, thermodynamically controlled reactions have higher activation energies and require harsh conditions to complete (Reaction 2, Figure 9). In microwave driven reactions, the molecules are provided powerful instantaneous energy, which allows them to reach these higher activation energy levels and leads to the thermodynamic product. This mechanism is a probable explanation for some of the work that has

Figure 9

*Kinetically vs.
thermodynamically
controlled reactions*



been done recently on highly diastereoselective syntheses, which were generated using microwave irradiation versus conventional heating.¹⁶

Clearly, microwave heating is extremely useful in slower reactions where high activation energies are required to do various transformations. Empirically, the activation energy parameter expresses the temperature dependence of the rate constant. A small E_a corresponds to a rate constant that does not increase rapidly with temperature, whereas a reaction with strong temperature dependence has a large E_a . With the elevated molecular energy generated by the transfer of microwave energy, reactions that required many hours or even days to complete have been accomplished in minutes. It is also possible to use non-polar solvents to actually reduce bulk heating and directly energize the molecule. The solvent acts as a heat sink to pull thermal heat away from the reactants. The use of non-polar solvents in this manner will open opportunities to perform temperature-sensitive reactions that were not possible with conventional heating. This will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2. Microwave-enhanced synthesis greatly expands the options organic chemists have in their search for new compounds. Drug discovery can be taken to new heights as chemists explore the depths of their creativity.

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Chapter 2

Solvents

Solvents play a very important role in organic synthesis. Most reactions take place in solution, and therefore, choice of solvent can be a crucial factor in the outcome of a reaction. One of the most important characteristics of a solvent is its polarity. With microwave heating, this becomes a more significant component, as microwaves directly couple with the molecules that are present in the reaction mixture. The more polar a reac-

The more efficient a solvent is in coupling with the microwave energy, the faster the temperature of the reaction mixture increases.

tion mixture is, the greater its ability to couple with the microwave energy. As discussed in the previous chapter, this interaction leads to a rapid rise in temperature and faster reaction rates. This chapter will discuss the theory behind solvent polarity and how it pertains to the indi-

vidual solvents, their physical constants, and how they behave in a microwave field. In addition, the last section will discuss how to choose a solvent in a microwave-enhanced organic reaction.

I. Theory

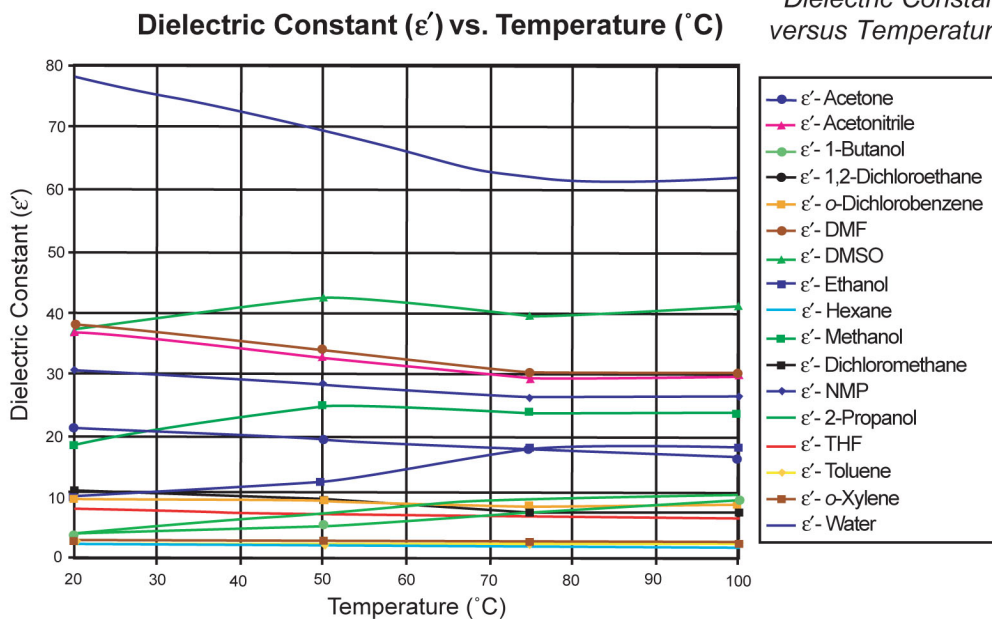
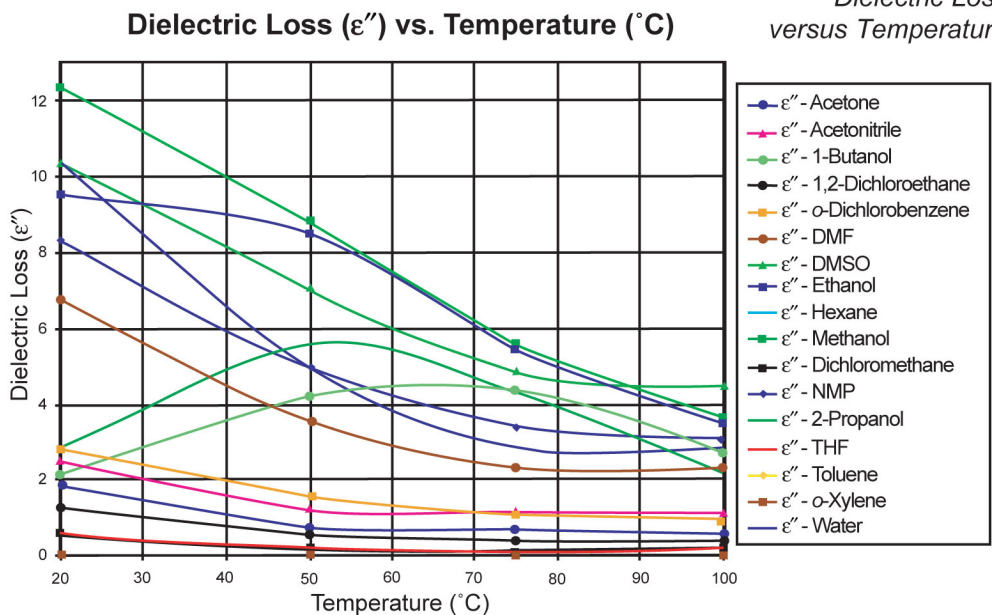
Many factors characterize the polarity of a solvent. Intrinsically, the dielectric constant, dipole moment, dielectric loss, tangent delta, and dielectric relaxation time all contribute to an individual solvent's **absorbing characteristics**. The **dielectric constant (ϵ')**, also known as the relative permittivity, of a solvent measures its ability to store electric charges. Mathematically, it is the ratio of the electrical capacity of a capacitor filled with the solvent to the electrical capacity of the evacuated capacitor ($\epsilon' = C_{\text{filled}}/C_{\text{evacuated}}$). This value, when measured, is dependent on both temperature and frequency.

The **dipole moment**, which is measured in Debye units (D), is also a mathematical entity. It is the product of the distance between the centers of charge in the solvent molecule multiplied by the magnitude of that charge. One equation used to determine dipole moment is: $T = pE$ (T = torque, p = dipole moment, and E = field strength). The magnitude can also be defined as: $\mu = Qr$ (μ = dipole moment, Q = charge, and r = distance between charges). Molecules with large dipole moments also have large dielectric constants. This is because polarization depends on **dipole rotation** — the ability of a molecule's dipole to align with a rapidly changing electric field.¹⁷

The ability of a substance to convert electromagnetic energy into heat at a given frequency and temperature is determined by the following equation: $\tan \delta = \epsilon''/\epsilon'$. **Tangent delta (δ)**, or loss tangent, is the dissipation factor of the sample or how efficiently microwave energy is converted into thermal energy. It is defined as the ratio of the dielectric loss, or complexed permittivity (ϵ''), to the dielectric constant (ϵ'). **Dielectric loss** is the amount of input microwave energy that is lost to the sample by being

Loss Tangent Equation

$$\tan \delta = \epsilon''/\epsilon'$$

Figure 11*Dielectric Constant
versus Temperature***Figure 12***Dielectric Loss
versus Temperature*

At this frequency, the only thing that can change the three parameters is temperature. As the temperature of a solvent increases, a decrease in its relaxation time and dielectric parameters will be seen, and hence, its coupling efficiency. There are a few exceptions, but this is generally the trend. A graphical representation of this effect for the tangent delta, dielectric constant, and dielectric loss values of 17 common solvents is shown in Figures 10-12, respectively.

II. Solvents

When considering solvents for a microwave-enhanced organic reaction, a chemist must now realize that boiling points become a less important factor in that decision. Microwave energy (300 W) will reach and bypass the boiling point of most solvents in a matter of seconds. Using pressurized reaction vessels provide for greater use of the lower boiling point solvents that are normally ignored in conventional high temperature reactions. Alternatively, one factor that becomes more important is how efficient the molecules in a solvent or a solvent mixture couple with an applied microwave field.

Microwave energy will reach and bypass the boiling point of most solvents in a matter of seconds.

As we established in the previous section, the three main dielectric parameters all factor into the ability of a solvent to absorb microwave energy, but they do so quite differently. Table 1 has been developed to show this difference in thirty common solvents. There are three main columns (dielectric constant, $\tan \delta$, and dielectric loss, respectively), which are indicated by the bold lines. The data, which was measured at room temperature and at a frequency of 2450 MHz, is shown in descending order.^{17,18a} We find that the values, and their respective solvents, represented in the third column (dielectric loss) are most indicative of how quickly a

solvent will reach its desired temperature. In general, the higher the number, the more efficient the solvent converts microwave energy into thermal energy, and thus, the faster the temperature will increase.

The solvents in Table 1 can easily be categorized into three different groups: high, medium, and low absorbing solvents. By examining the dielectric loss values from the third column of the table, one can see where significant gaps in between the numbers are present (bold lines). The high absorbing solvents are ones that have dielectric losses greater than 14.00. Medium absorbers would generally have dielectric loss values between 1.00 and 13.99, and low absorbing molecules have dielectric losses that are less than 1.00. High absorbers like small chain alcohols, dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO), and nitrobenzene all have large dielectric losses, so they heat very quickly within the microwave chamber. Common organic solvents that are grouped as medium absorbers include dimethylformamide (DMF), acetonitrile, butanols, ketones, and water. These, too, heat very efficiently, but they require more time to reach desired temperatures. Additionally, chloroform, dichloromethane, ethyl acetate, and, as expected, ethers and hydrocarbons, are very low microwave absorbing solvents. They can be heated to temperatures well above their boiling points, but they take much longer.

Water, for example, has the highest dielectric constant (80.4) of the thirty solvents, but its tangent delta and dielectric loss values do not rank at the top of their respective lists. If we only considered the dielectric constant, we would assume that water is the most polar solvent in a microwave field. This is not the case. It should be classified as a medium absorber, which is where the second and third columns ($\tan \delta$ and dielectric loss) categorize it. In another example, acetonitrile is ranked fairly high in the dielectric constant column with a value of 37.5. Looking at the tangent delta values, acetonitrile plummets close to the bottom at 0.062. So, what kind of

Table 1

Dielectric constant (ϵ'), $\tan \delta$, and dielectric loss (ϵ'') for 30 common solvents (measured at room temperature and 2450 MHz)

Solvent (bp °C)	Dielectric Constant (ϵ')	Solvent	$\tan \delta$	Solvent	Dielectric Loss (ϵ'')
Water (100)	80.4	Ethylene Glycol	1.350	Ethylene Glycol	49.950
Formic Acid (100)	58.5	Ethanol	.941	Formic Acid	42.237
DMSO (189)	45.0	DMSO	.825	DMSO	37.125
DMF (153)	37.7	2-Propanol	.799	Ethanol	22.866
Acetonitrile (82)	37.5	1-Propanol	.757	Methanol	21.483
Ethylene Glycol (197)	37.0	Formic Acid	.722	Nitrobenzene	20.497
Nitromethane (101)	36.0	Methanol	.659	1-Propanol	15.216
Nitrobenzene (202)	34.8	Nitrobenzene	.589	2-Propanol	14.622
Methanol (65)	32.6	1-Butanol	.571	Water	9.889
NMP (215)	32.2	Isobutanol	.522	1-Butanol	9.764
Ethanol (78)	24.3	2-Butanol	.447	NMP	8.855
Acetone (56)	20.7	2-Methoxyethanol	.410	Isobutanol	8.248
1-Propanol (97)	20.1	o-Dichlorobenzene	.280	2-Butanol	7.063
MEK (80)	18.5	NMP	.275	2-Methoxyethanol	6.929
2-Propanol (82)	18.3	Acetic Acid	.174	DMF	6.070
1-Butanol (118)	17.1	DMF	.161	o-Dichlorobenzene	2.772
2-Methoxyethanol (124)	16.9	1,2-Dichloroethane	.127	Acetonitrile	2.325
2-Butanol (100)	15.8	Water	.123	Nitromethane	2.304
Isobutanol (108)	15.8	Chlorobenzene	.101	MEK	1.462
1,2-Dichloroethane (83)	10.4	Chloroform	.091	1,2-Dichloroethane	1.321
o-Dichlorobenzene (180)	9.9	MEK	.079	Acetone	1.118
Dichloromethane (40)	9.1	Nitromethane	.064	Acetic Acid	1.079
THF (66)	7.4	Acetonitrile	.062	Chloroform	0.437
Acetic Acid (113)	6.2	Ethyl Acetate	.059	Dichloromethane	0.382
Ethyl Acetate (77)	6.0	Acetone	.054	Ethyl Acetate	0.354
Chloroform (61)	4.8	THF	.047	THF	0.348
Chlorobenzene (132)	2.6	Dichloromethane	.042	Chlorobenzene	0.263
o-Xylene (144)	2.6	Toluene	.040	Toluene	0.096
Toluene (111)	2.4	Hexane	.020	o-Xylene	0.047
Hexane (69)	1.9	o-Xylene	.018	Hexane	0.038

solvent is acetonitrile? Once again, we look to the third column where acetonitrile falls in the middle with a dielectric loss value of 2.325. Acetonitrile should be considered as a medium absorber.

In addition to the coupling efficiency of a solvent, a chemist should also be aware of the pressures that are generated at certain temperatures in a sealed tube for that solvent. A pressurized environment can be very advantageous to many different kinds of chemistries. As the temperature of a solvent increases above its boiling point, more and more pressure builds up in the reaction vessel. In solvent-only experiments, the pressure that is generated for a specific temperature is independent of the solvent volume to head space ratio. (The head space is the volume of a 10-mL capacity pressure tube that is not occupied by the solvent at room temperature.) This will not be true for actual chemical reactions, as newly formed molecules are constantly being introduced into the gas phase throughout the duration of the reaction. Tables 2-26 show the pressures generated at specific temperatures for 25 common solvents at 1-, 3-, and 5-mL volumes (with head space volumes of 9-, 7-, and 5-mL volumes, respectively), using 300 W of microwave power. Accompanying each table is a figure (Figures 13-37) that shows the temperature and pressure curves for 3-mL of that particular solvent in a 10-mL capacity pressure tube. These solvents were subjected to a rigorous method of 300 W, 250 °C, and a 300 psi limit for ten minutes. Upon reaching 250 °C, the instrument held for 10 seconds and then cooled. Some solvents never reached 250 °C in the ten minute period, and this can be seen in the figures with longer run times. For most microwave synthesis instruments if the pressure inside the vessel reaches 300 psi, the instrument will abort its run (see dichloromethane, ethanol, and methanol). The figures display the approximate maximum pressure and temperature that each solvent can achieve.

Table 2

Pressures generated at specific temperatures of acetone for different volume to head space ratios

Solvent (bp) and Volume	Temperature (°C) / Pressure (psi)	BP + 10°	BP + 25°	BP + 50°
Acetone (56)				
1 mL	Temperature	66	81	106
	Pressure	4	13	40
3 mL	Temperature	66	81	106
	Pressure	4	12	40
5 mL	Temperature	66	81	106
	Pressure	4	8	40

Figure 13

Temperature and pressure curves for 3 mL of acetone

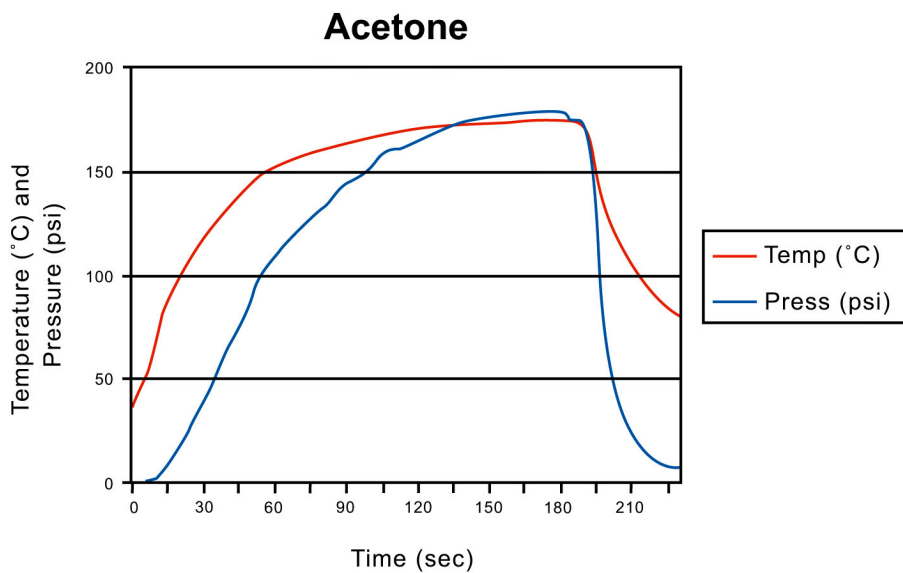


Table 3

Pressures generated at specific temperatures of acetonitrile for different volume to head space ratios

Solvent (bp) and Volume	Temperature (°C) /Pressure (psi)	BP + 10°	BP + 25°	BP + 50°
Acetonitrile (82)				
1 mL	Temperature	92	107	132
	Pressure	4	10	35
3 mL	Temperature	92	107	132
	Pressure	4	11	38
5 mL	Temperature	92	107	132
	Pressure	6	11	35

Figure 14

Temperature and pressure curves for 3 mL of acetonitrile

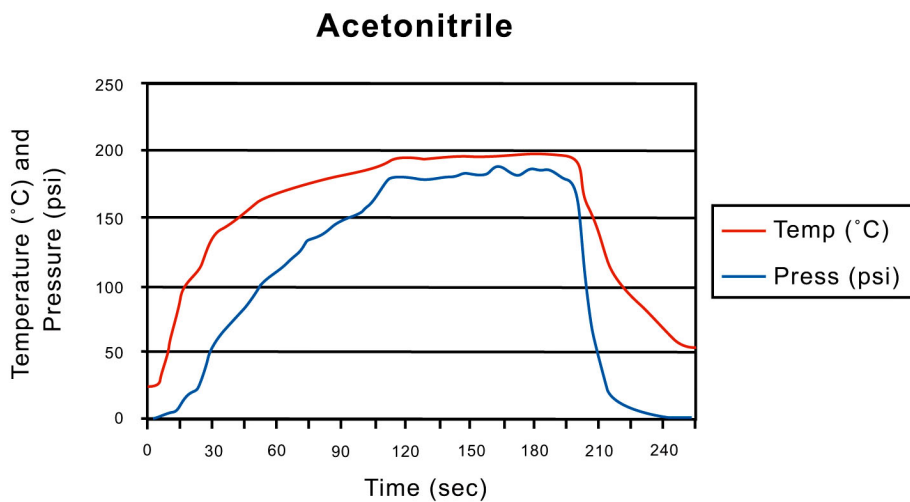


Table 4

Pressures generated at specific temperatures of 1-butanol for different volume to head space ratios

Solvent (bp) and Volume	Temperature (°C) / Pressure (psi)	BP + 10°	BP + 25°	BP + 50°
1-Butanol (118)				
1 mL	Temperature	128	143	168
	Pressure	7	13	41
3 mL	Temperature	128	143	168
	Pressure	13	20	41
5 mL	Temperature	128	143	168
	Pressure	15	22	45

Figure 15

Temperature and pressure curves for 3 mL of 1-butanol

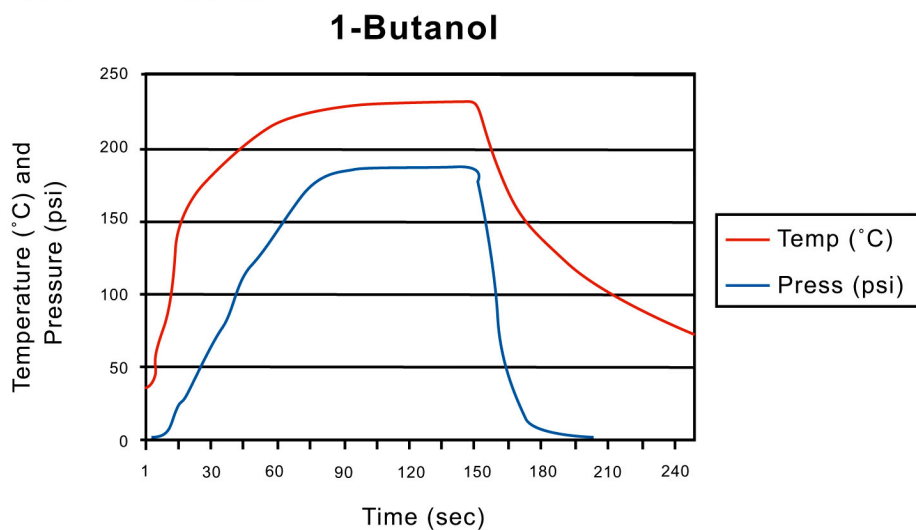


Table 5

Pressures generated at specific temperatures of chloroform for different volume to head space ratios

Solvent (bp) and Volume	Temperature (°C) /Pressure (psi)	BP + 10°	BP + 25°	BP + 50°
Chloroform (61)				
1 mL	Temperature	71	86	111
	Pressure	9	16	44
3 mL	Temperature	71	86	111
	Pressure	8	15	40
5 mL	Temperature	71	86	111
	Pressure	9	14	42

Figure 16

Temperature and pressure curves for 3 mL of chloroform

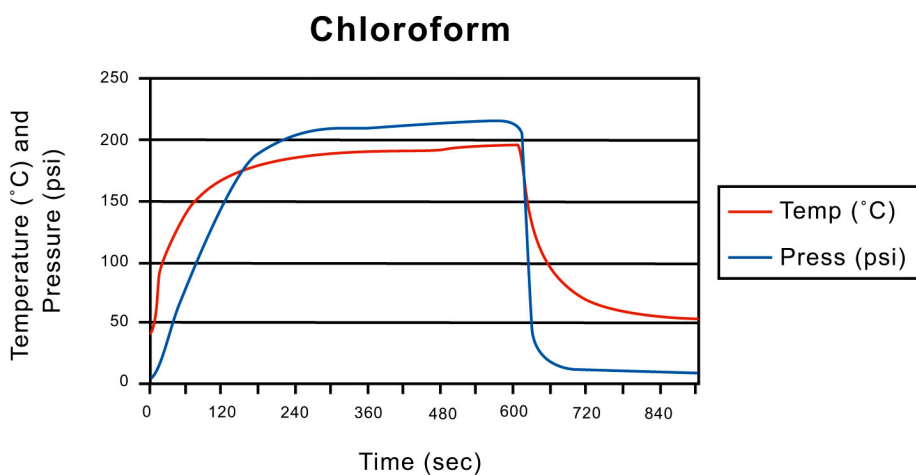


Table 6

Pressures generated at specific temperatures of o-dichlorobenzene for different volume to head space ratios

Solvent (bp) and Volume	Temperature (°C) /Pressure (psi)	BP + 10°	BP + 25°	BP + 50°
o-Dichlorobenzene (180)				
	Temperature	190	205	230
1 mL	Pressure	4	12	30
3 mL	Temperature	190	205	230
	Pressure	6	11	32
5 mL	Temperature	190	205	230
	Pressure	7	11	30

Figure 17

Temperature and pressure curves for 3 mL of o-dichlorobenzene

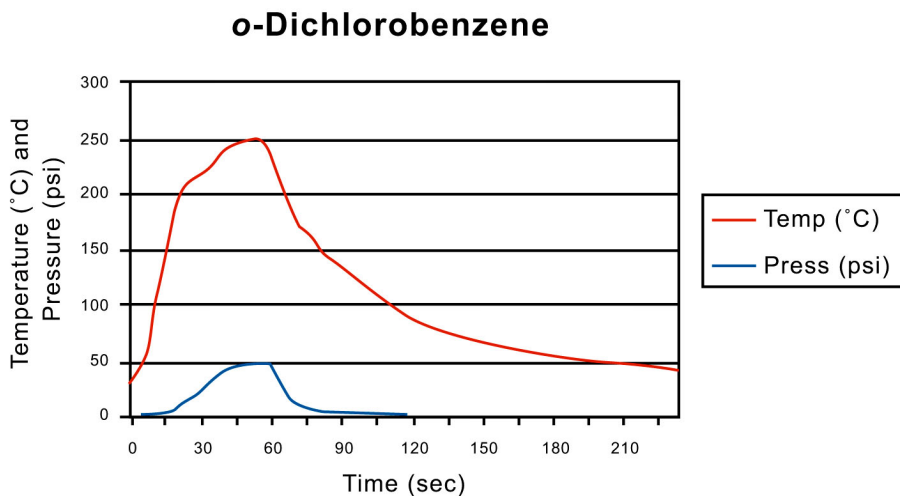


Table 7

Pressures generated at specific temperatures of 1,2-dichloroethane for different volume to head space ratios

Solvent (bp) and Volume	Temperature (°C) /Pressure (psi)	BP + 10°	BP + 25°	BP + 50°
1,2-Dichloroethane (83)				
1 mL	Temperature	93	108	133
	Pressure	4	10	35
3 mL	Temperature	93	108	133
	Pressure	3	10	35
5 mL	Temperature	93	108	133
	Pressure	4	10	34

Figure 18

Temperature and pressure curves for 3 mL of 1,2-dichloroethane

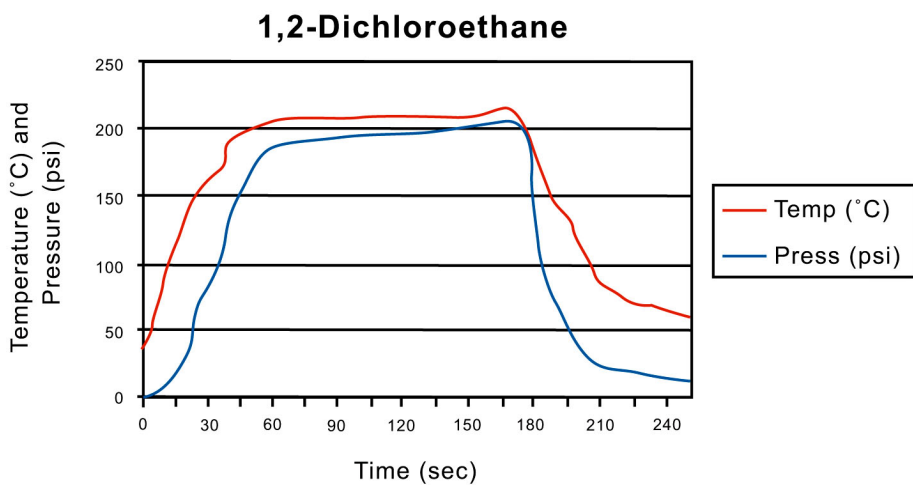


Table 8

Pressures generated at specific temperatures of dichloromethane for different volume to head space ratios

Solvent (bp) and Volume	Temperature (°C) / Pressure (psi)	BP + 10°	BP + 25°	BP + 50°
Dichloromethane (40)				
1 mL	Temperature	50	65	90
	Pressure	4	10	32
3 mL	Temperature	50	65	90
	Pressure	4	10	37
5 mL	Temperature	50	65	90
	Pressure	2	8	42

Figure 19

Temperature and pressure curves for 3 mL of dichloromethane

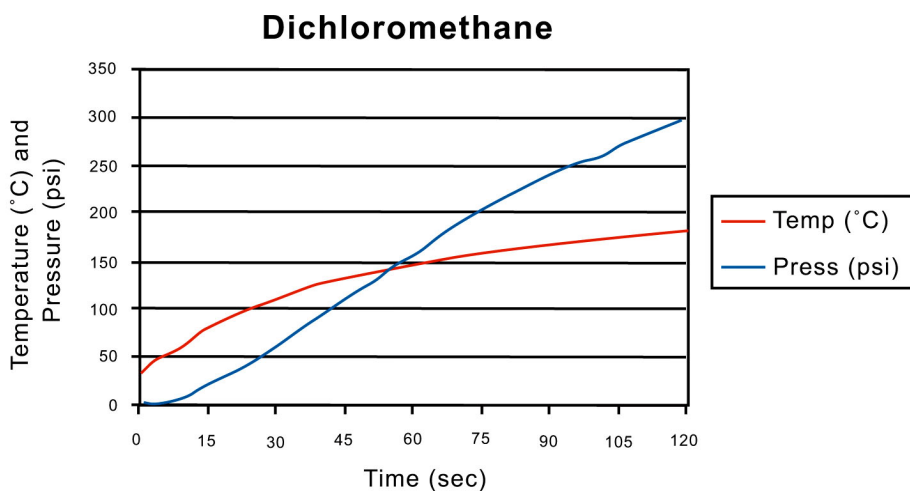


Table 9

Pressures generated at specific temperatures of DMF for different volume to head space ratios

Solvent (bp) and Volume	Temperature (°C) /Pressure (psi)	BP + 10°	BP + 25°	BP + 50°
DMF (153)				
1 mL	Temperature	163	178	203
	Pressure	6	13	35
3 mL	Temperature	163	178	203
	Pressure	10	16	38
5 mL	Temperature	163	178	203
	Pressure	7	16	37

Figure 20

Temperature and pressure curves for 3 mL of DMF

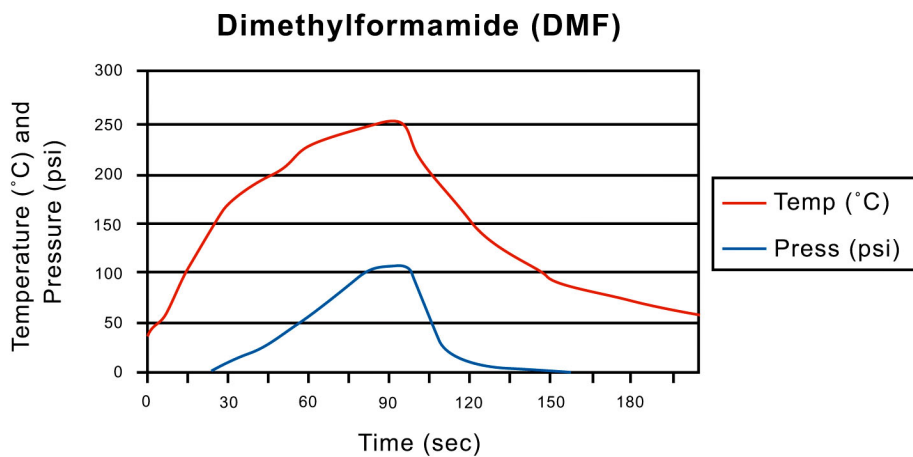


Table 10

Pressures generated at specific temperatures of DMSO for different volume to head space ratios

Solvent (bp) and Volume	Temperature (°C) /Pressure (psi)	BP + 10°	BP + 25°	BP + 50°
DMSO (189)				
1 mL	Temperature	199	214	239
	Pressure	6	14	36
3 mL	Temperature	199	214	239
	Pressure	6	14	34
5 mL	Temperature	199	214	239
	Pressure	10	17	37

Figure 21

Temperature and pressure curves for 3 mL of DMSO

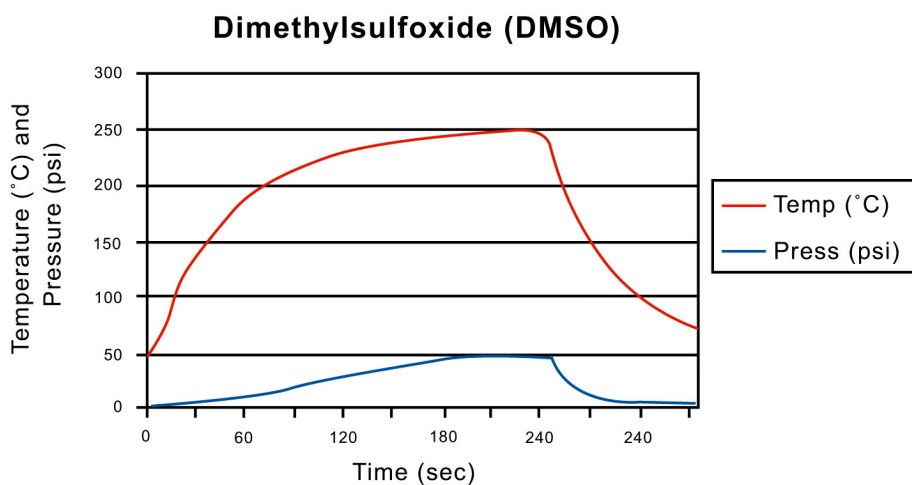


Table 11

Pressures generated at specific temperatures of 1,4-dioxane for different volume to head space ratios

Solvent (bp) and Volume	Temperature (°C) /Pressure (psi)	BP + 10°	BP + 25°	BP + 50°
1,4-Dioxane (101)				
1 mL	Temperature	111	126	203
	Pressure	10	14	30
3 mL	Temperature	111	126	203
	Pressure	7	14	22
5 mL	Temperature	111	126	203
	Pressure	7	11	19

Figure 22

Temperature and pressure curves for 3 mL of 1,4-dioxane

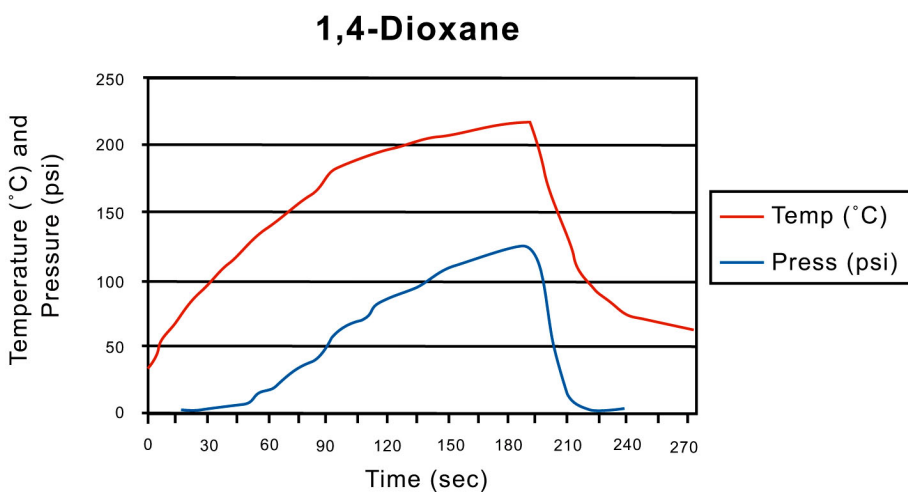


Table 12

Pressures generated at specific temperatures of ethanol for different volume to head space ratios

Solvent (bp) and Volume	Temperature (°C) /Pressure (psi)	BP + 10°	BP + 25°	BP + 50°
Ethanol (78)				
1 mL	Temperature	88	103	128
	Pressure	18	23	56
3 mL	Temperature	88	103	128
	Pressure	30	43	73
5 mL	Temperature	88	103	128
	Pressure	18	33	63

Figure 23

Temperature and pressure curves for 3 mL of ethanol

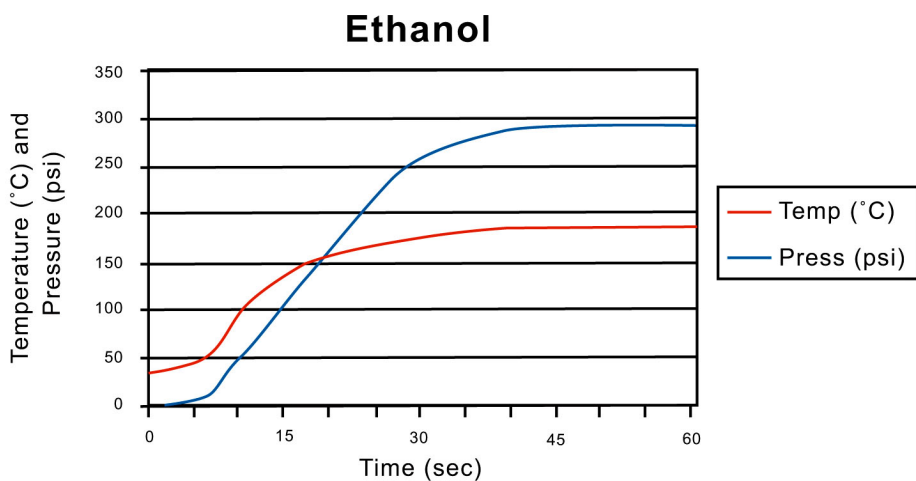


Table 13

Pressures generated at specific temperatures of ethyl acetate for different volume to head space ratios

Solvent (bp) and Volume	Temperature (°C) /Pressure (psi)	BP + 10°	BP + 25°	BP + 50°
Ethyl Acetate (77)				
1 mL	Temperature	87	102	127
	Pressure	8	13	36
3 mL	Temperature	87	102	127
	Pressure	8	14	39
5 mL	Temperature	87	102	127
	Pressure	9	12	39

Figure 24

Temperature and pressure curves for 3 mL of ethyl acetate

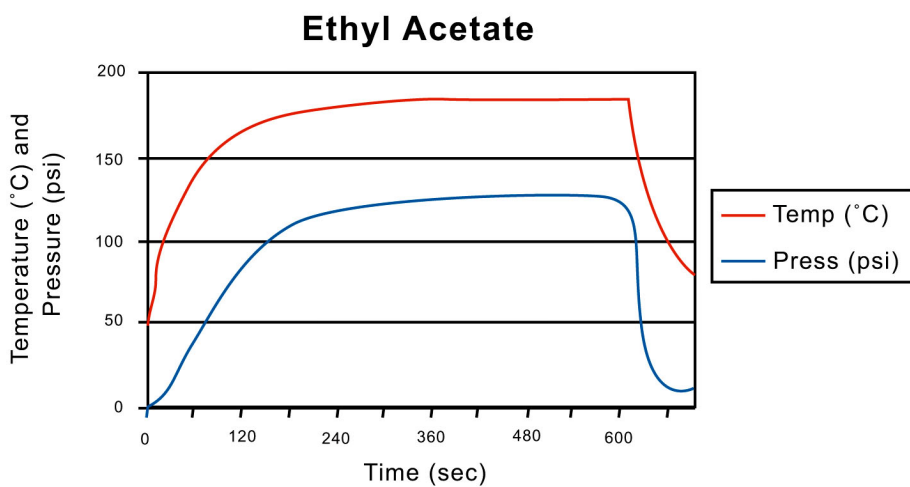


Table 14

Pressures generated at specific temperatures of HMPA for different volume to head space ratios

Solvent (bp) and Volume	Temperature (°C) /Pressure (psi)	BP + 10°	BP + 25°	BP + 50°
HPMA (231)				
1 mL	Temperature	241	-	-
	Pressure	8	-	-
3 mL	Temperature	241	-	-
	Pressure	8	-	-
5 mL	Temperature	241	-	-
	Pressure	10	-	-

Figure 25

Temperature and pressure curves for 3 mL of HMPA

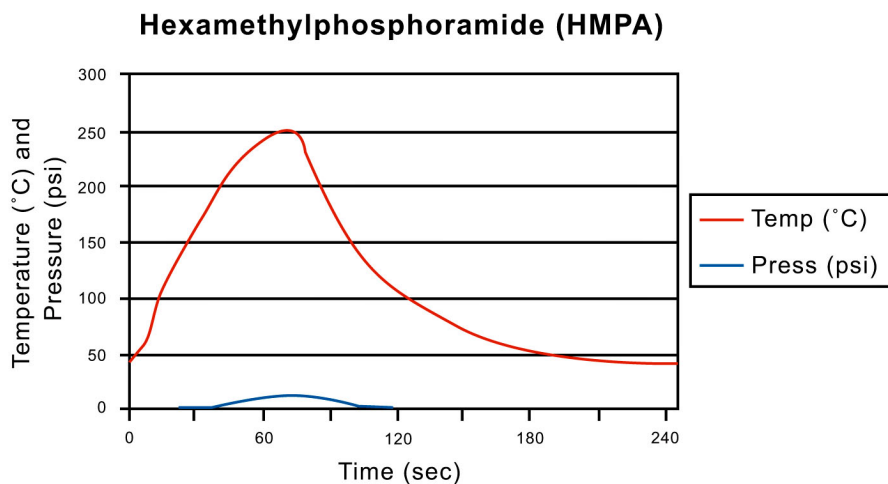


Table 15

Pressures generated at specific temperatures of hexane for different volume to head space ratios

Solvent (bp) and Volume	Temperature (°C) / Pressure (psi)	BP + 10°	BP + 25°	BP + 50°
Hexane (69)				
1 mL	Temperature	79	94	119
	Pressure	3	10	26
3 mL	Temperature	79	94	119
	Pressure	3	10	23
5 mL	Temperature	79	94	119
	Pressure	4	8	20

Figure 26

Temperature and pressure curves for 3 mL of hexane

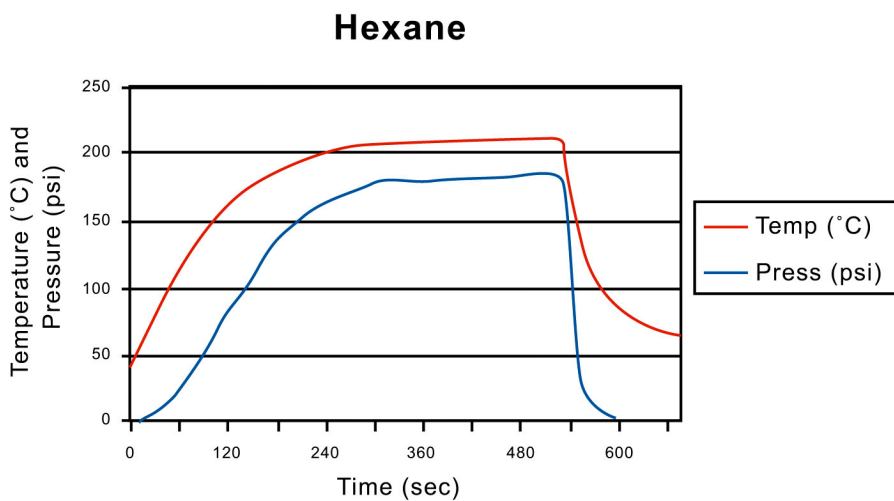


Table 16

Pressures generated at specific temperatures of methanol for different volume to head space ratios

Solvent (bp) and Volume	Temperature (°C) /Pressure (psi)	BP + 10°	BP + 25°	BP + 50°
Methanol (65)				
1 mL	Temperature	75	90	115
	Pressure	9	17	50
3 mL	Temperature	75	90	115
	Pressure	9	16	48
5 mL	Temperature	75	90	115
	Pressure	9	19	56

Figure 27

Temperature and pressure curves for 3 mL of methanol

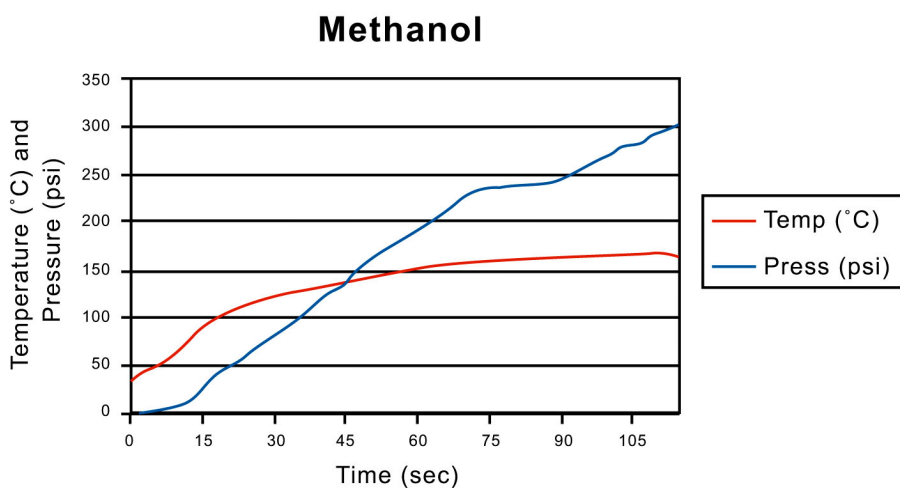


Table 17

Pressures generated at specific temperatures of methyl t-butyl ether for different volume to head space ratios

Solvent (bp) and Volume	Temperature (°C) /Pressure (psi)	BP + 10°	BP + 25°	BP + 50°
MTBE (55)				
1 mL	Temperature	65	80	105
	Pressure	9	16	40
3 mL	Temperature	65	80	105
	Pressure	9	13	36
5 mL	Temperature	65	80	105
	Pressure	9	16	40

Figure 28

Temperature and pressure curves for 3 mL of MTBE

Methyl t-Butyl Ether

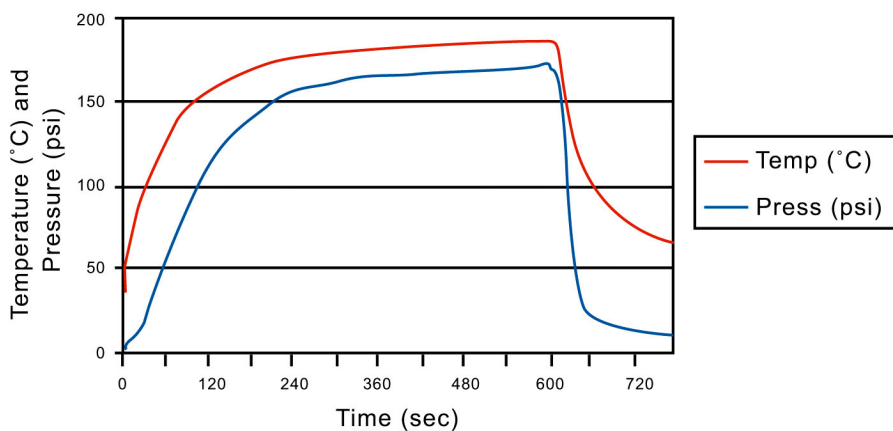


Table 18

Pressures generated at specific temperatures of methyl ethyl ketone for different volume to head space ratios

Solvent (bp) and Volume	Temperature (°C) / Pressure (psi)	BP + 10°	BP + 25°	BP + 50°
MEK (80)				
1 mL	Temperature	90	105	130
	Pressure	7	12	38
3 mL	Temperature	90	105	130
	Pressure	8	11	37
5 mL	Temperature	90	105	130
	Pressure	9	13	38

Figure 29

Temperature and pressure curves for 3 mL of MEK

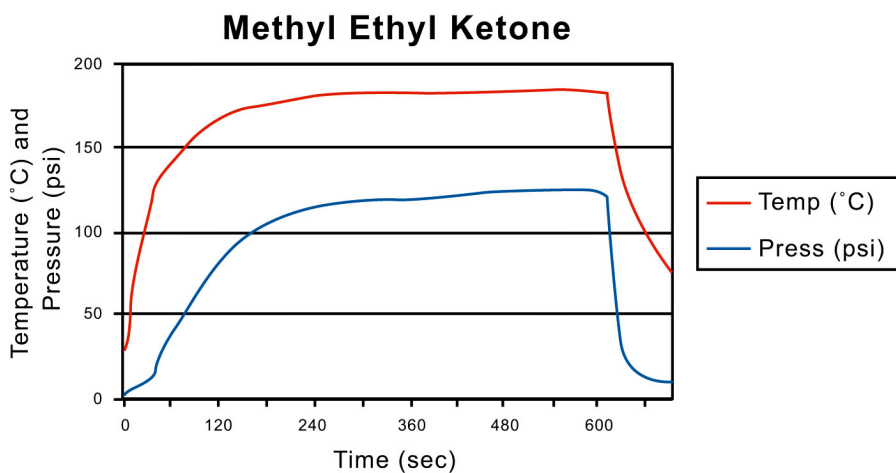


Table 19

Pressures generated at specific temperatures of NMP for different volume to head space ratios

Solvent (bp) and Volume	Temperature (°C) / Pressure (psi)	BP + 10°	BP + 25°	BP + 50°
NMP (215)				
1 mL	Temperature	225	-	-
	Pressure	8	-	-
3 mL	Temperature	225	-	-
	Pressure	8	-	-
5 mL	Temperature	225	-	-
	Pressure	11	-	-

Figure 30

Temperature and pressure curves for 3 mL of NMP

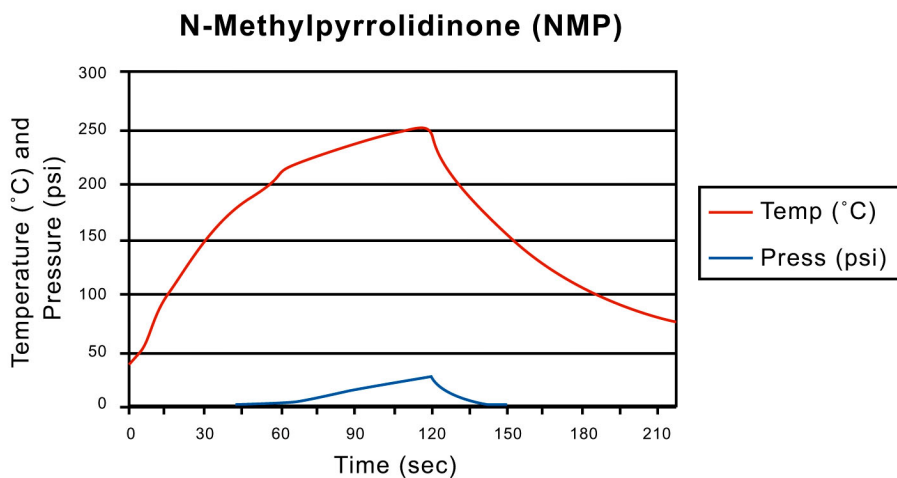


Table 20

Pressures generated at specific temperatures of nitrobenzene for different volume to head space ratios

Solvent (bp) and Volume	Temperature (°C) /Pressure (psi)	BP + 10°	BP + 25°	BP + 50°
Nitrobenzene (202)				
1 mL	Temperature	212	227	-
	Pressure	5	10	-
3 mL	Temperature	212	227	-
	Pressure	12	15	-
5 mL	Temperature	212	227	-
	Pressure	8	12	-

Figure 31

Temperature and pressure curves for 3 mL of nitrobenzene

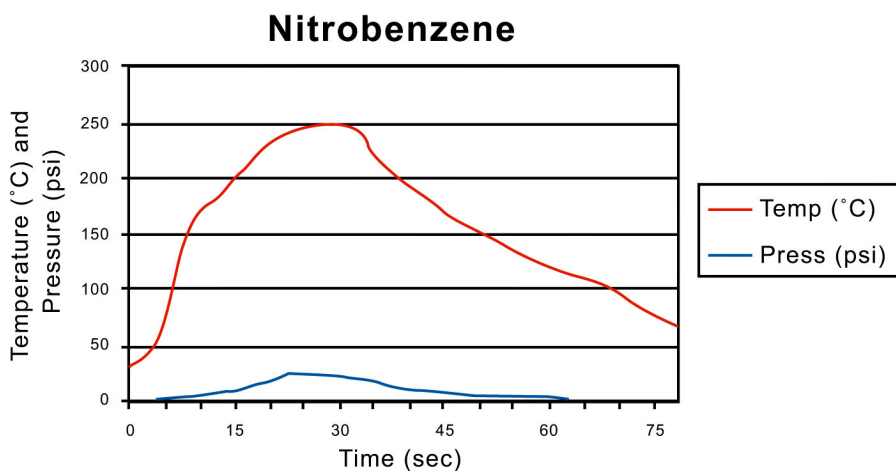


Table 21

Pressures generated at specific temperatures of pyridine for different volume to head space ratios

Solvent (bp) and Volume	Temperature (°C) / Pressure (psi)	BP + 10°	BP + 25°	BP + 50°
Pyridine (115)				
1 mL	Temperature	125	140	165
	Pressure	8	14	37
3 mL	Temperature	125	140	165
	Pressure	8	14	42
5 mL	Temperature	125	140	165
	Pressure	9	16	44

Figure 32

Temperature and pressure curves for 3 mL of pyridine

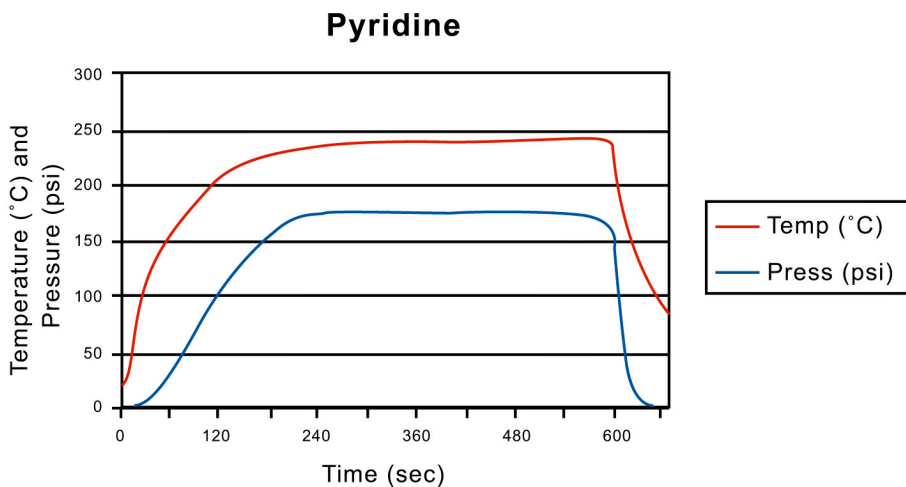


Table 22

Pressures generated at specific temperatures of THF for different volume to head space ratios

Solvent (bp) and Volume	Temperature (°C) / Pressure (psi)	BP + 10°	BP + 25°	BP + 50°
THF (66)				
1 mL	Temperature	76	91	116
	Pressure	6	12	36
3 mL	Temperature	76	91	116
	Pressure	5	10	36
5 mL	Temperature	76	91	116
	Pressure	5	12	37

Figure 33

Temperature and pressure curves for 3 mL of THF

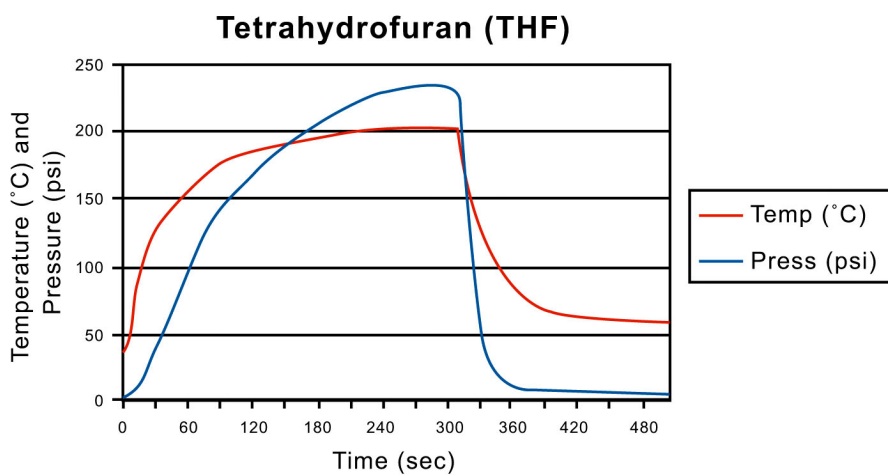


Table 23

Pressures generated at specific temperatures of toluene for different volume to head space ratios

Solvent (bp) and Volume	Temperature (°C) /Pressure (psi)	BP + 10°	BP + 25°	BP + 50°
Toluene (111)				
1 mL	Temperature	121	136	161
	Pressure	8	10	24
3 mL	Temperature	121	136	161
	Pressure	6	10	21
5 mL	Temperature	121	136	161
	Pressure	6	9	14

Figure 34

Temperature and pressure curves for 3 mL of toluene

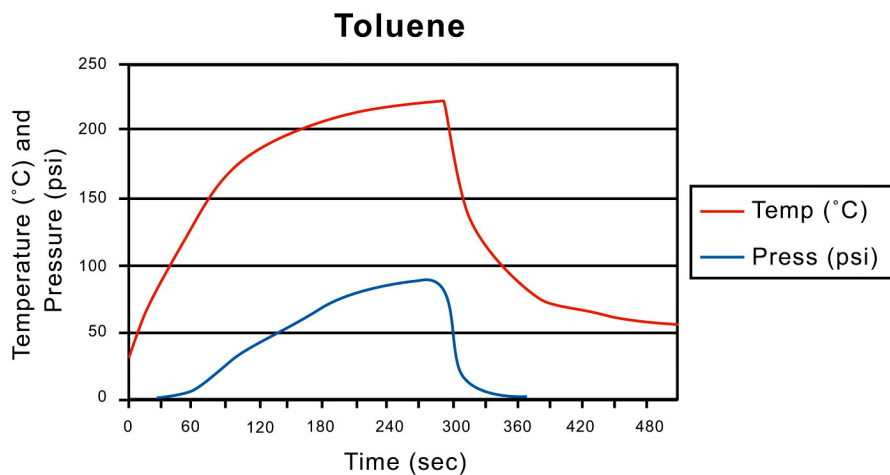


Table 24

Pressures generated at specific temperatures of triethylamine for different volume to head space ratios

Solvent (bp) and Volume	Temperature (°C) / Pressure (psi)	BP + 10°	BP + 25°	BP + 50°
Triethylamine (89)				
1 mL	Temperature	99	114	139
	Pressure	2	10	30
3 mL	Temperature	99	114	139
	Pressure	2	12	32
5 mL	Temperature	99	114	139
	Pressure	2	10	28

Figure 35

Temperature and pressure curves for 3 mL of triethylamine

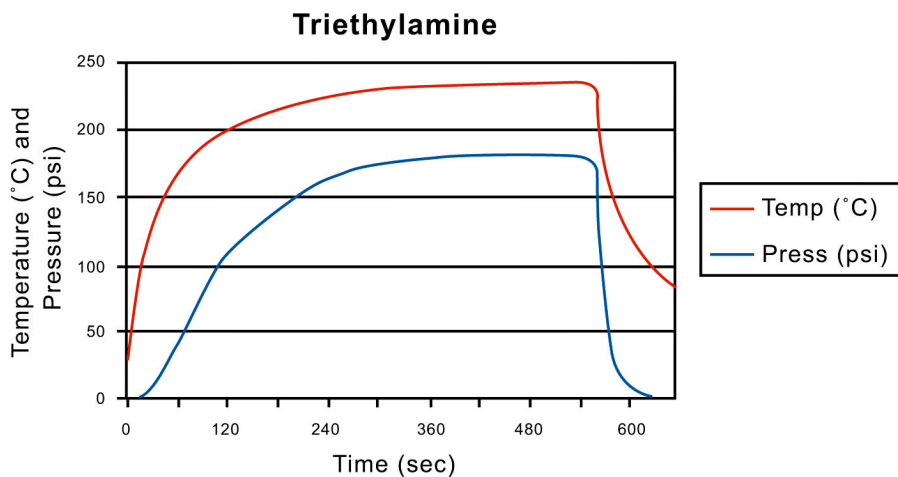


Table 25

Pressures generated at specific temperatures of water for different volume to head space ratios

Solvent (bp) and Volume	Temperature (°C) / Pressure (psi)	BP + 10°	BP + 25°	BP + 50°
Water (100)				
1 mL	Temperature	110	125	150
	Pressure	5	16	46
3 mL	Temperature	110	125	150
	Pressure	8	17	46
5 mL	Temperature	110	125	150
	Pressure	12	20	46

Figure 36

Temperature and pressure curves for 3 mL of water

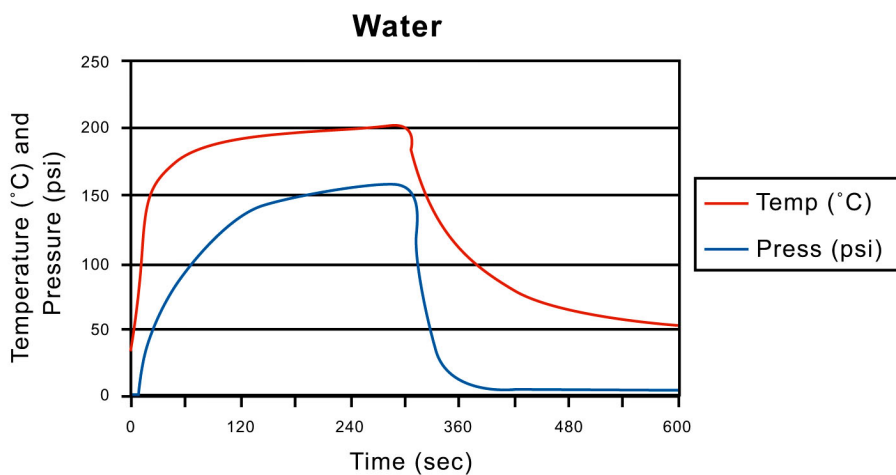


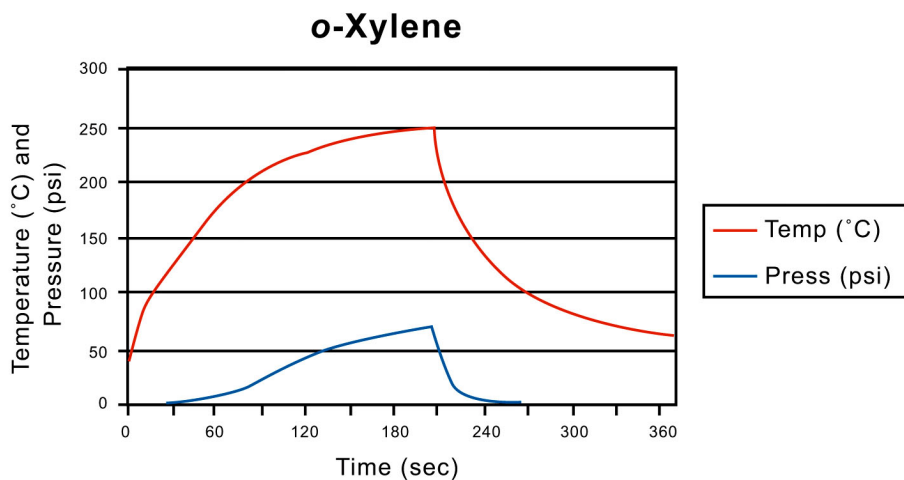
Table 26

Pressures generated at specific temperatures of o-xylene for different volume to head space ratios

Solvent (bp) and Volume	Temperature (°C) / Pressure (psi)	BP + 10°	BP + 25°	BP + 50°
o-Xylene (140)				
	Temperature	150	165	190
1 mL	Pressure	5	10	21
3 mL	Temperature	150	165	190
	Pressure	6	8	20
5 mL	Temperature	150	165	190
	Pressure	6	8	17

Figure 37

Temperature and pressure curves for 3 mL of o-xylene



It should be noted that Tables 2-26 and Figures 13-37 only show the temperatures and pressures of neat solvents. There were no reagents present in the pressure vessels. Organic reactions contain many different reagents and catalysts. Their presence can drastically enhance the coupling efficiency of a reaction mixture. The information provided here should only be used as a reference. A typical curve for a chemical reaction will not mirror those shown in any of the above figures. As an example, Scheme 1 shows a Heck reaction that was performed in 0.5 mL DMF with the following programmed method: 60 W, 5 min hold time, 200 °C, 250 psi. Using the same parameters, a control run was performed with 0.5 mL DMF only. Both the reaction and the control run were performed in 10-mL pressure tubes. Figure 38 displays the temperature and pressure curves of each on the same graph for comparison purposes. As the figure shows, the control never reached the set temperature, whereas in the Heck reaction, 200 °C was reached in about 1 minute. Additionally, the pressure achieved in the Heck reaction was almost five times greater than that of the control run. The added reagents greatly increase the polarity of the entire reaction mixture.

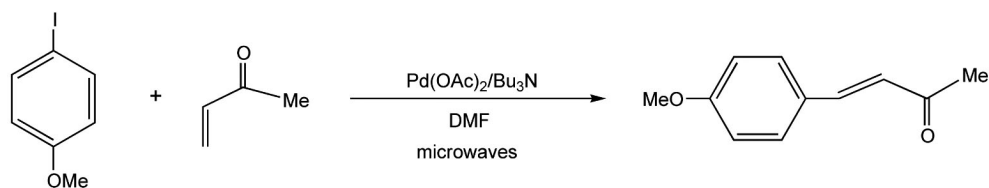
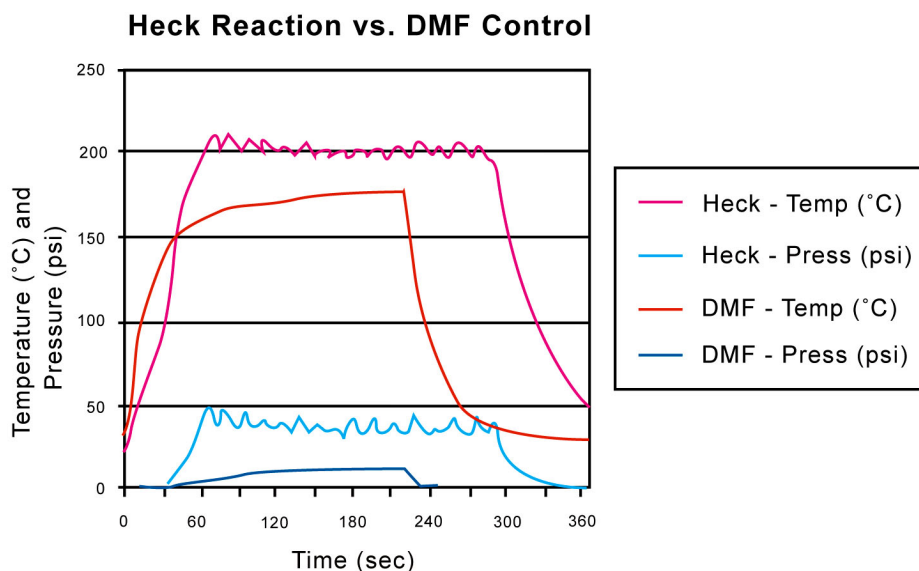
Scheme 1

Figure 38

Temperature and pressure curve comparison between a Heck reaction and a 0.5 mL DMF control



Water becomes a more interesting solvent at higher temperatures and pressures. Under normal conditions, water maintains a very high dielectric constant and persistent hydrogen bonding. As the temperature and pressure of water increases, it begins to act more like an organic solvent. It changes from a very polar liquid to an almost nonpolar one and organic compounds become more soluble. With these enhanced conditions, water has increased acidity, reduced density, and a lower dielectric constant. With microwaves, the supercritical levels of water ($T_c = 374\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$, $P_c = 218\text{ atm} = 3204\text{ psi} = 221\text{ bar}$), where gaseous and liquid water coexist, are not quite reached. Nevertheless, the increased temperatures and pressures can be advantageous for organic synthesis in aqueous media.

Many solvents decompose to hazardous components from prolonged exposure to high temperatures. Prior to choosing an organic solvent, a chemist should be aware of the stability of that solvent at high temperatures. This information is provided in Section 10 (Stability and Reactivity) of the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for that particular solvent. For example, a few of the more commonly used solvents can degenerate to hazardous components at high temperatures. Dichloromethane, 1,2-dichloroethane, and chloroform are among the chlorine-containing solvents and will decompose to hydrochloric acid (HCl), carbon monoxide (CO), and carbon dioxide (CO₂). In addition, both dichloromethane and chloroform will also yield the highly toxic phosgene (ClCOCl). Dimethylformamide (DMF), dimethylacetamide (DMA), acetonitrile, triethylamine, pyridine, and N-methylpyrrolidinone (NMP) all will decompose to carbon monoxide (CO), carbon dioxide (CO₂), and nitrogen oxides (N_xO_y). It should be noted that if DMF becomes discolored, it may cause vessel failures and release toxic fumes. Additionally, pyridine and acetonitrile can produce cyanides. Dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO) also decomposes to toxic components at high temperatures. It can yield sulfur dioxide (SO₂), formaldehyde (CH₂O), methyl mercaptan (MeSH), dimethyl sulfide (Me₂S), dimethyl disulfide (Me₂S₂), and bis(methylthio)methane (CH₂(SMe)₂). Upon exposure to high temperatures, hexamethylphosphoramide (HMPA) will turn a cloudy yellow-orange. Thermal decomposition of HMPA produces toxic fumes of phosphines and phosphorous oxides. These are just a few safety issues that an organic chemist should be aware of when performing high temperature reactions in pressurized vessels.

III. Ionic Liquids

Ionic liquids are becoming promising and useful substitutes for standard organic solvents. Not only are

they environmentally benign, but they also possess unique chemical and physical properties.¹⁹ As their name indicates, ionic liquids are only comprised of ions and can also be

Ionic liquids, also known as fused salts, contain one positively charged ion and one negatively charged ion.

referred to as fused salts. In general, these fused salts contain one positively charged ion and one negatively charged ion. They have a vast liquid temperature range of almost 300 °C, from –96 °C to 200 °C (unlike water which only has a range of 100 °C). Though they usually consist of poorly coordinating ions, ionic liquids are highly polar, nonvolatile, and readily

dissolve both organic and inorganic compounds. These characteristics are all quite beneficial to synthetic organic chemists.

Ionic liquids are either organic salts or mixtures consisting of at least one organic component. They are usually prepared by metathesis of a halide salt of the desired cation with a Group 1 metal or an ammonium salt of the desired anion. Figure 39 shows the most common salts, which are alkylammonium, alkylphosphonium, N-alkylpyridinium, and N,N-dialkylimidazolium cations, respectively. The anion may be organic or inorganic, and there are a number of options to choose from: CH_3COO^- , CF_3COO^- , F^- , Cl^- , Br^- , I^- , BF_4^- , PF_6^- , NO_3^- , AlCl_4^- , FeCl_4^- , NiCl_3^- , ZnCl_3^- , and SnCl_5^- . Figure 40 exhibits common ionic liquids, some of which are even commercially available.

Figure 39

Common ionic liquid cations

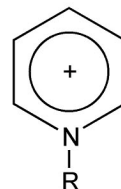
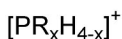
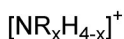
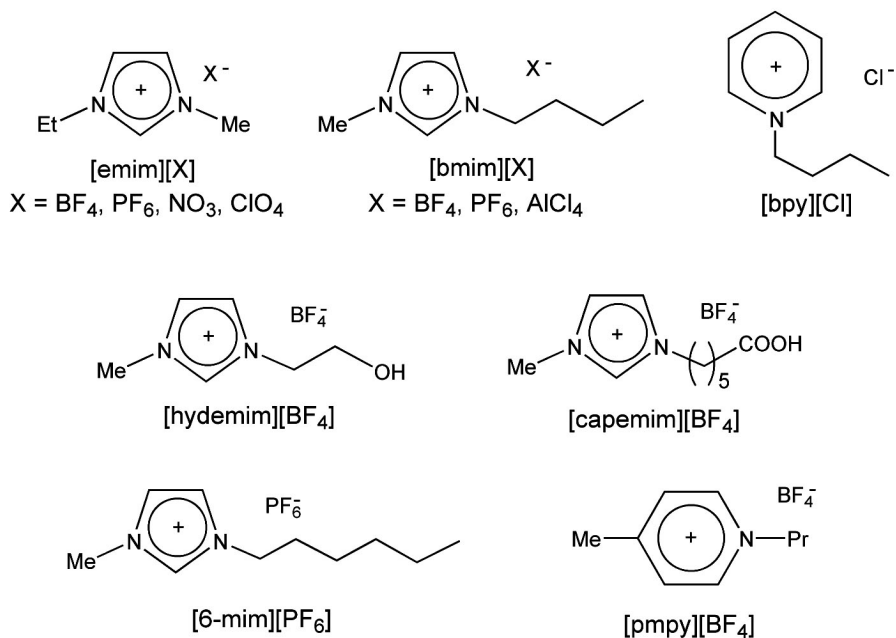
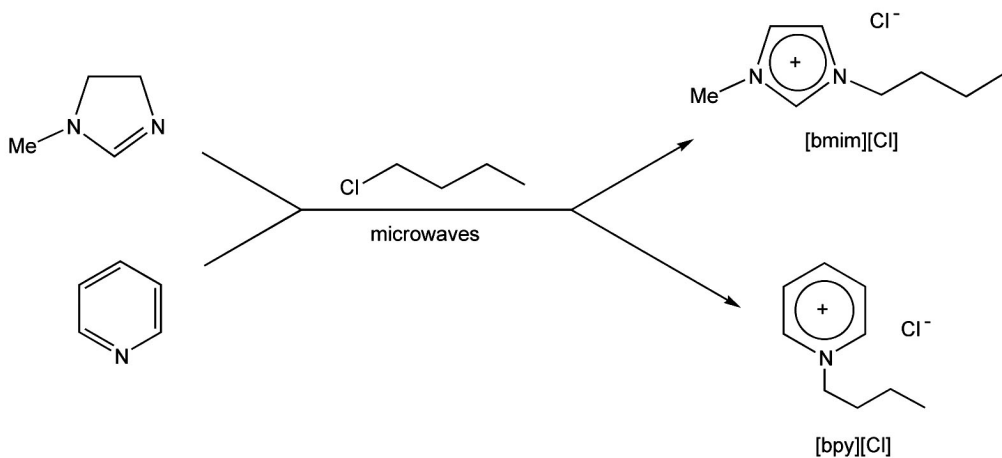


Figure 40
Common ionic liquids



Scheme 2

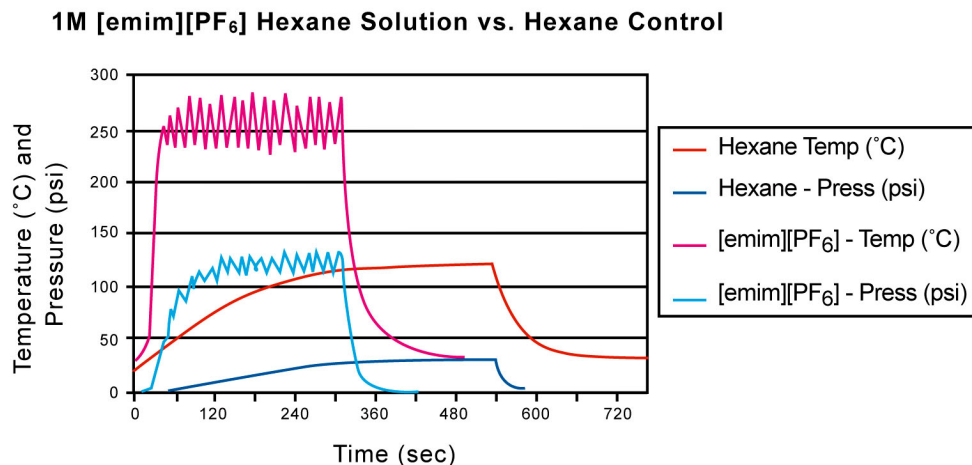


The conventional preparation of ionic liquids is quite time consuming, as they can require up to 7 days of reflux; thus, microwave irradiation is a preferable method to activate and speed up ionic liquid synthesis.^{20,21} Khadilkar et al. synthesized both 1-butyl-3-methylimidazoliumchloride [bmim][Cl] and 1-butylpyridiniumchloride [bpy][Cl] in 60 minutes and 22 minutes, respectively, with microwave heating (Scheme 2).²¹

Microwave irradiation has also been used to enhance organic reactions in which an ionic liquid is used as the solvent. As discussed in the introduction, the two fundamental mechanisms for transferring energy from microwaves to the substance being heated are either dipole rotation or ionic conduction. Ionic liquids absorb microwave irradiation extremely well and transfer energy rapidly by ionic conduction. Figures 41 and 42 exhibit the temperature and pressure curves for two ionic liquids in 2 mL of hexane (1M [emim][PF₆] and 1M

Figure 41

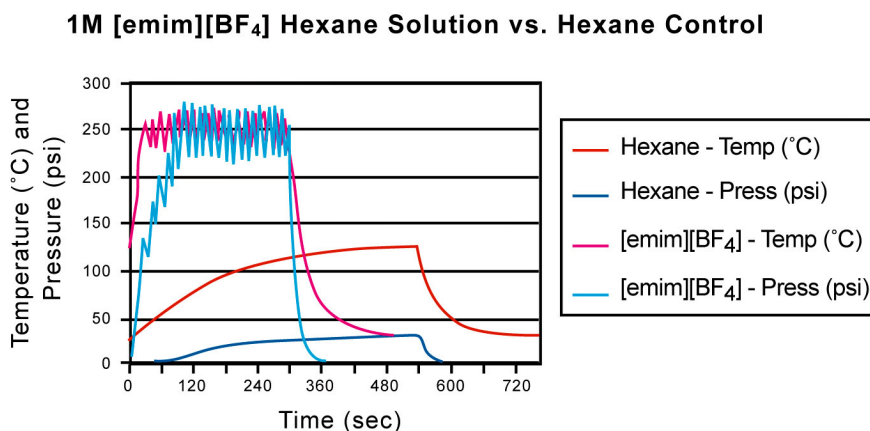
Temperature and pressure curve comparison between a 1M [emim][PF₆] hexane solution (2 mL) and a 2-mL hexane control



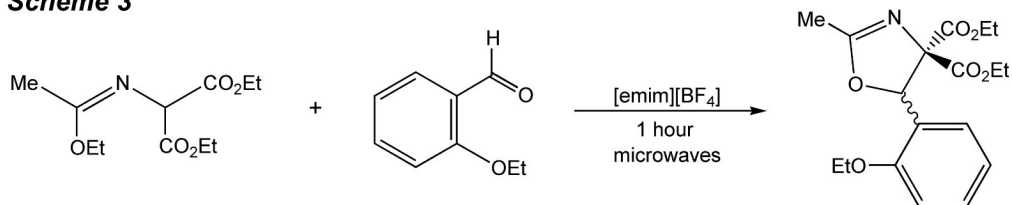
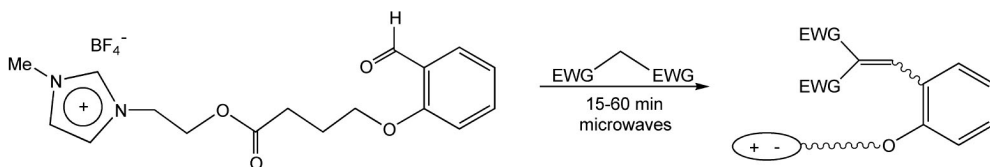
[emim][BF₄], respectively) versus a 2-mL hexane control. Each sample was run with the following programmed method: 100 W, 5 min ramp time, 5 min hold time, 250 °C, 250 psi. All runs were performed in 10-mL pressure tubes. As the graphs indicate, the hexane control did not reach the maximum set temperature, and it needed nine minutes to even reach 120 °C. In both 1M ionic liquid solutions, the temperature was met and exceeded in less than 40 seconds. Additional ionic liquid experimentation in solvents has recently been published by Leadbeater et al.²²

Figure 42

Temperature and pressure curve comparison between a 1M [emim][BF₄] hexane solution (2 mL) and a 2-mL hexane control



The following 1,3-dipolar cycloaddition is an example of a microwave-enhanced organic reaction in an ionic liquid (Scheme 3).²³ Scheme 4 shows a microwave-induced Knoevenagel condensation reaction between a malonate derivative (EWG = electron withdrawing group) and a grafted ionic liquid phase.^{24,25} After the reaction occurs, the ionic liquid phase can be removed and then regenerated for future use.

Scheme 3**Scheme 4**

V. Choosing a solvent

An important step before attempting a microwave enhanced organic reaction is choosing a solvent. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the coupling efficiency of a solvent is very important to the outcome of the reaction. The more efficient a solvent is in coupling with the microwave energy, the faster the temperature of the reaction mixture increases. Table 27 contains some common

The more efficient a solvent is in coupling with the microwave energy, the faster the temperature of the reaction mixture increases.

organic solvents that have been categorized as high, medium, or low absorbers. It is a condensed version of Table 1. In addition, a pressurized environment can be very advantageous in performing many different kinds of chemistries. Microwave energy

(300 W) will reach and bypass the boiling point (Tables 2-26) of most solvents in a matter of seconds. Using pressurized reaction vessels provide for greater use of the lower boiling point solvents that are normally ignored in conventional high temperature reactions.

Table 27*High, Medium, and Low
absorbing solvents*

Absorbance Level	Solvents
High	DMSO; EtOH; MeOH; Propanols; Nitrobenzene; Formic Acid; Ethylene Glycol
Medium	Water; DMF; NMP; Butanols; Acetonitrile; HMPA; Methyl Ethyl Ketone, Acetone, and other ketones; Nitromethane; o-Dichlorobenzene; 1,2-Dichloroethane; 2-Methoxyethanol; Acetic Acid; Trifluoroacetic Acid
Low	Chloroform; Dichloromethane; Carbon Tetrachloride; 1,4-Dioxane, THF, Glyme, and other ethers; Ethyl Acetate; Pyridine; Triethylamine; Toluene; Benzene; Chlorobenzene; Xylenes; Pentane, Hexane, and other hydrocarbons

Choosing a solvent can be a dilemma. The first question to ask is whether high temperature, high pressure, or high energy is needed. When using conventional heat, chemists are usually concerned with the temperature and select a solvent accordingly. Pressure vessels and oil baths are used with higher boiling point solvents to maximize the temperature increase. Achieving high temperatures with microwaves is not the task here;

they can do that with hardly any effort. If a high temperature is required, then choose a solvent that will reach the set temperature. If maintaining a high pressure is all that is desired, then set a high maximum temperature for a low boiling point solvent. The pressure will increase rapidly as the temperature continues to rise above its boiling point. These are classical requirements that microwave energy can easily provide.

High energy is different. It is why microwaves have produced dramatically favorable results and the reason microwave energy is so beneficial to organic synthesis, as opposed to conventional heating which is much slower. The energy transfer in a microwave-assisted reaction is incredibly quick: energy is transferred every nanosecond that it is applied. When performing a microwave reaction, the user can program the power,

Simultaneous cooling of the vessel during a reaction has been shown to nearly double percent yields in some lower yielding reactions.

temperature, time, and, in some cases, a pressure limit. As the temperature reaches the input value, the power is reduced so that the reaction mixture does not bypass the set point. It then stays at a lower level in order to maintain the set temperature throughout the entire reaction.

It is the power, or energy, that is the most important variable in a microwave-enhanced reaction. Recent experimentation has shown that simultaneous cooling of the reaction vessel during a reaction will ensure a constant, high power level for direct molecular heating. This has dramatically affected reaction rates and nearly doubled the percent yields of some lower yielding reactions.¹⁸

One would assume that nonpolar solvents (i.e. hexane, benzene, toluene) are generally not used in microwave-assisted organic reactions. In Table 1, these solvents are all at the bottom of the three columns, possessing very low dielectric constants, $\tan \delta$ values, and

dielectric loss values. They do not couple very efficiently to microwave irradiation, and hence, would not heat a reaction very well. Conversely, a nonpolar solvent can act as a heat sink. Reaction mixtures that are temperature sensitive will benefit greatly from this capability. As microwaves are being added to a reaction, the nonpolar solvent, which is not interacting with the irradiation, will help to draw away the thermal heat being produced from the polar reagents. The reaction is still receiving activation energy, but its internal temperature will remain low. Simultaneous cooling of the microwave cavity can benefit this reaction condition and ensure a constant, high power level.

General synthetic organic chemistry rules still apply with microwave-assisted chemical reactions.

Regardless of whether one is performing a nucleophilic substitution, electrophilic substitution, or elimination reaction, the type of solvent for each remains the same. There are protic and aprotic solvents, and each of these may

Protic solvents solvate or interact with both cations and anions. Aprotic solvents only interact with cations.

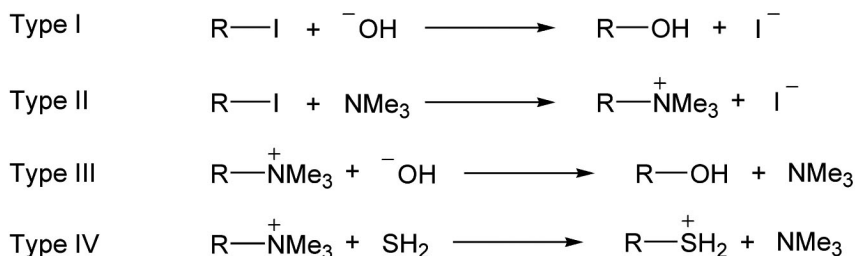
or may not be applicable for certain kinds of chemistry.

Protic solvents have the ability to solvate or interact with both cations and anions, whereas **aprotics** can only solvate cations. The solvents of each type are interspersed throughout Table 1. Chemists must use a combination of the previously discussed information from this chapter in order to determine their reaction conditions.

Nucleophilic substitution reactions (S_N2 , S_N1 , etc.) depend considerably on solvent effects for their success. Whether a transition state is stable or unstable in a solvent greatly influences the outcome of the reaction. Additionally, for S_N2 reactions, stabilization or destabilization of the reactant nucleophile is also a major factor. As illustrated in Scheme 5, S_N2 reactions can be categorized

into four types (I, II, III, and IV), and they generally require aprotics (hexane, benzene, Et₂O, CHCl₃, ethyl acetate, acetone, HMPA, DMF, DMSO, acetonitrile).²⁶ Protic solvents are disfavored in these reactions, since the ground state energy level of the attacking nucleophile is lowered by solvation. In other words, the nucleophile is stabilized by solvation and, therefore, less reactive towards the electrophile. The polarity of the aprotic solvent is also important. The only type in Scheme 5 that succeeds in highly polar solvents is Type II because the reactants are uncharged. The reactions of Types I, III, and IV have at least one charged reactant, and the reaction is actually hindered by a very polar solvent.

Scheme 4



The stability of the transition state in S_N1 reactions is extremely important. The solvent used strongly influences this stability. S_N1 reactions generally occur more rapidly in highly polar protic solvents than in aprotic and nonpolar solvents, though there are exceptions. The energy level of the transition state that leads to the carbocation intermediate is lowered by solvation. Imagine solvent molecules orienting themselves around the cation in such a manner that the electron-rich ends of the solvent dipoles face the positive charge. This is described in the Hammond postulate, which states that any factor stabilizing the intermediate carbocation

should increase the rate of reaction.²⁶ Alcohols, water, and formic acid are good solvents for S_N1 , but HMPA, DMF, and DMSO have also been known to work well since they are polar.

The solvent effects necessary for successful electrophilic substitution reactions are slightly different from those just discussed for nucleophilic substitutions. Mechanistically, S_E2 is analogous to S_N2 where a new bond forms as the old one breaks. One difference is in the solvent preference. The reaction rate increases as solvent polarity increases. The mechanism of the S_E1 reaction is analogous to the S_N1 reaction: slow ionization occurs as the bond breaks, followed by new bond formation. As with the S_N1 reaction, S_E1 reactions are faster and more successful in highly polar solvents.

Elimination reactions (a double bond is formed by either simultaneous (E2) or sequential (E1) leaving group departure and proton abstraction) are analogous to nucleophilic substitutions, E2 to S_N2 and E1 to S_N1 . Interestingly, in many cases, an E2 reaction will compete with an S_N2 in the same reaction mixture. Both contain a nucleophile that will happily abstract a proton or attack an electrophilic carbon. In general, increasing the polarity of the solvent will favor substitution over elimination. Alternatively, elimination will be more favorable if the solvent is nonionizing and in the presence of a strong base. For E1 reactions, a more polar solvent will enhance the rate of the mechanism, especially one that involves an ionic intermediate, as has been the case with the other two-step reaction mechanisms (S_N1 , S_E1).

Thus, solvents play an extremely significant role in microwave-enhanced organic chemistry. Using the dielectric loss values from Table 1, coupled with the general rules of organic chemistry previously described in this chapter, chemists can now develop the specific conditions that will optimize their synthetic endeavors.

Chapter 3

Chemical Reactions in the Presence and Absence of Solvent

Microwave irradiation is not only applicable to standard solution-phase work, but to solid-phase and solvent-free systems as well. Many synthetic methods can be executed by at least one of these systems, though one may have to experiment in order to find the optimal conditions. This chapter discusses

The two main types of conditions used for chemical reactions, those run in the presence of solvent and those run in a solventless environment, are equally important and both can benefit from microwave heating.

the different types of reaction conditions that can be used successfully with microwave irradiation and should be utilized in conjunction with Chapter 4 for synthetic applications. *Note: The reader should assume that all reaction schemes shown in this*

chapter utilize microwave irradiation. In multi-step schemes, the use of microwaves is indicated by the word “microwaves” on the arrow.

I. Reactions in the presence of solvent

Solution-phase reactions performed in the presence of solvent can be either homogeneous or heterogeneous. Homogeneous reactions include your standard organic reactions in which all reagents are dissolved in the solvent. Microwave irradiation has been used extensively and successfully with homogeneous solution-phase reactions. Chapter 4 provides an in-depth review of the many homogeneous synthetic applications that have been enhanced with microwaves.

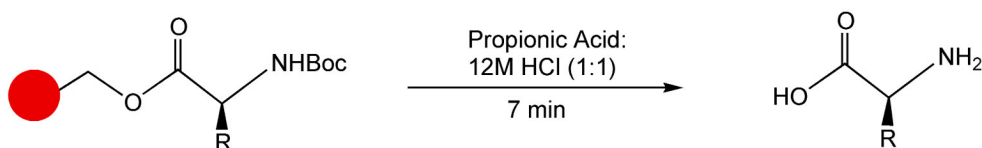
Heterogeneous reactions in solution involve insoluble solids that are used as reagents, catalysts, or supports. These include transition-metal and Lewis acid catalysts, non-dissolvable salts, and solid-phase resins (beads, lanterns, crowns, pins). These types of transformations are widely used and highly successful. One of the main disadvantages in traditional heterogeneous reactions are the long reaction times that are required for their completion, which is largely due to the insolubility. Use of microwave irradiation has been shown to drastically speed up these reactions, allowing for productive high throughput synthesis.

The following chapter on synthetic applications extensively covers heterogeneous reactions involving transition-metal catalysts, as well as those that utilize Lewis acids and other insoluble salts. It also provides a few examples of solid-phase reactions.^{188,204,609,631} The remainder of this section will provide a more detailed review on microwave-enhanced reactions that have been performed on a solid-phase resin.²⁷⁻⁴²

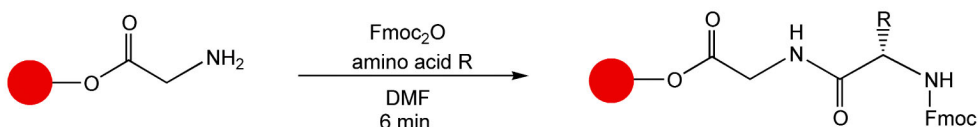
Combinatorial chemistry on solid-phase supports was first applied to peptide synthesis. It made sense to use peptides in the first microwave-assisted, solid-phase reaction. Traditional peptide hydrolysis requires high temperature 6M HCl for at least 24 hours. In 1988, Yu et al. performed a successful hydrolysis in seven minutes in a domestic microwave oven (Scheme 6).²⁷

The same group, four years later, performed peptide coupling reactions in quantitative yields with microwave irradiation (Scheme 7).²⁸

Scheme 6

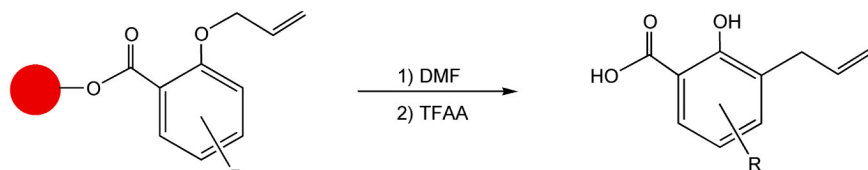


Scheme 7



Sigmatropic rearrangements are important pericyclic reactions that involve the formation of new carbon-carbon bonds. Sometimes, conventional methods require very long reaction times. Microwave irradiation has been used to facilitate these transformations, and this is outlined in the next chapter. Claisen rearrangements have been successfully performed on a solid phase resin coupled with microwave heating. Scheme 8 illustrates the rearrangement of resin bound O-allylic

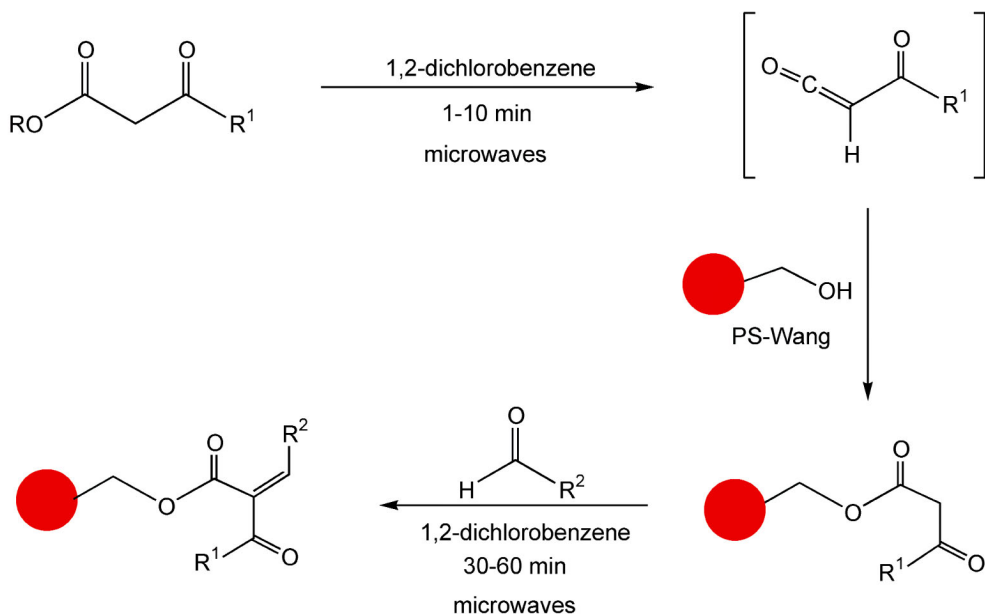
Scheme 8



Microwave: 4-6 min, 68-92% yield
Conventional: 10-16 hours, 60-90% yield

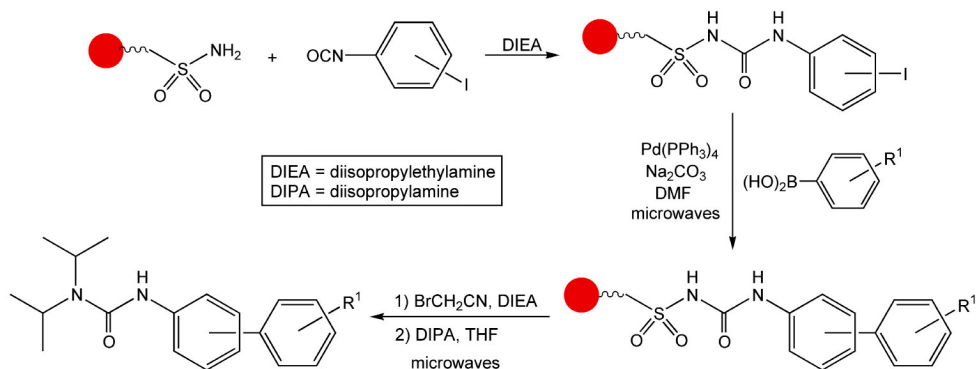
aryl ethers to *ortho*-allylic salicylic acid derivatives, where the allyl, hydroxyl, and carboxylic acid groups are adjacent to each other.³⁸ These compounds are difficult to synthesize with traditional aromatic substitution reactions.

Strohmeier and Kappe have performed an important example of microwave-assisted, solid-phase parallel synthesis.²⁹ Enones, as well as their 1,3-dicarbonyl intermediates, are important building blocks for heterocyclic scaffolds that are used in pharmaceutical drug design. Conventional solid-phase methods require multiple steps and long high-temperature reaction times. In this microwave-enhanced, two-step procedure, acetoacetylation of a polystyrene Wang (PS-Wang) resin to a functionalized β -ketoester, followed by Knoevenagel condensation with an aldehyde, yields enones in less than one hour (Scheme 9).

Scheme 9

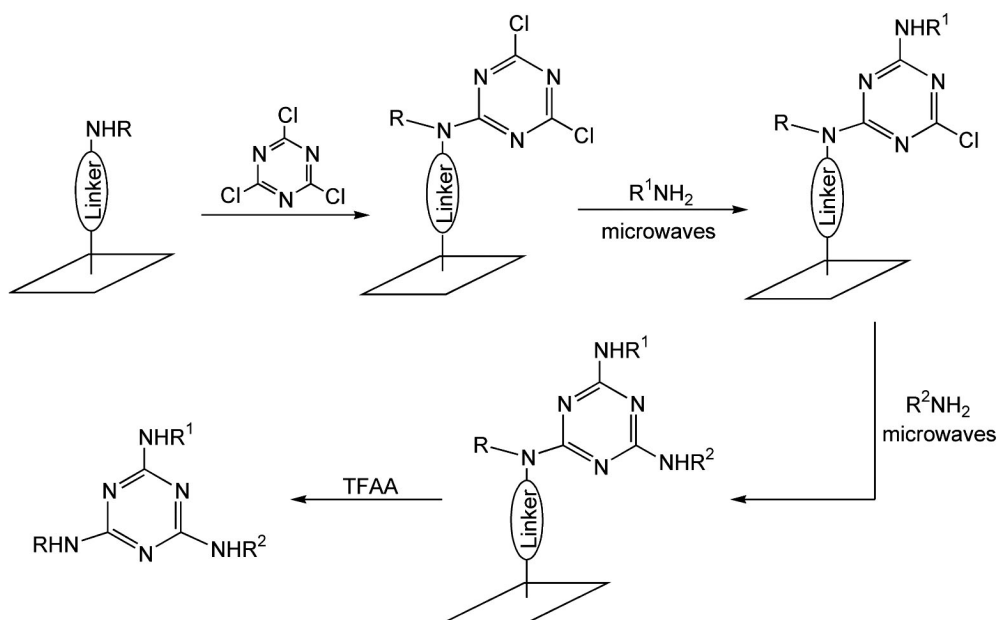
Glass and Combs have also performed rapid parallel synthesis on solid-phase resins with microwave irradiation.³¹ They have examined the utility of a “safety catch” sulphonamide linker to produce large libraries of diverse amides and ureas. These safety catch linkers are highly stable through a given synthetic sequence until cleavage from the resin is necessary. The linker must first be activated before nucleophilic displacement of the substrate can occur. Conventional displacement of the substrate requires a very strong nucleophile and limits library diversity. The use of microwave irradiation allows for any nucleophile to displace the resin, including weak ones. Scheme 10 shows a facile biaryl urea synthesis, which includes a Suzuki coupling reaction, linker activation via alkylation, and subsequent cleavage with diisopropyl amine (DIPA).

Scheme 10



Microwave-assisted, solid-phase syntheses are not restricted to spherical bead polymer resins. Scharn et al. used a planar cellulose membrane to synthesize a parallel library of 8000 1,3,5-triazines via nucleophilic substitution reactions.⁴⁰ The planar membrane is composed of an array of “spots” that are individually derivatized. Scheme 11 illustrates how an amino-functionalized spot

is doped with cyanuric chloride and then diversified with different amines by microwave heating. The second nucleophilic substitution requires five hours of thermal heat for completion, but with microwave irradiation, an entire library can be synthesized in six minutes.

Scheme 11

II. Solvent-free reactions

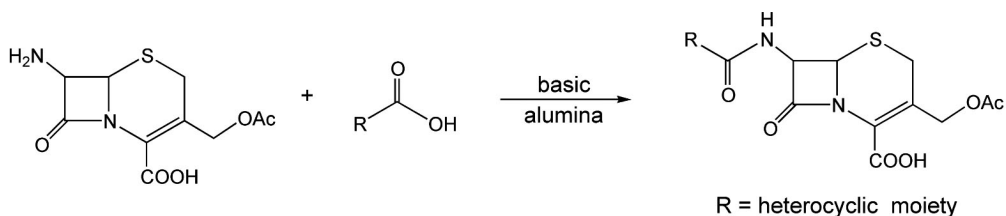
Reactions performed in a solvent-free environment are becoming more prevalent in organic chemistry. An increasing need for less hazardous reaction conditions and environmentally safe procedures, or green chemistry, has led chemical synthesis in this direction. Microwave irradiation has been used extensively in solvent-free reactions.^{5,8,16,20,43-181} There are three main types of solvent free reactions: reaction mixtures adsorbed onto mineral oxides, phase transfer catalysis (PTC), and neat reactions.

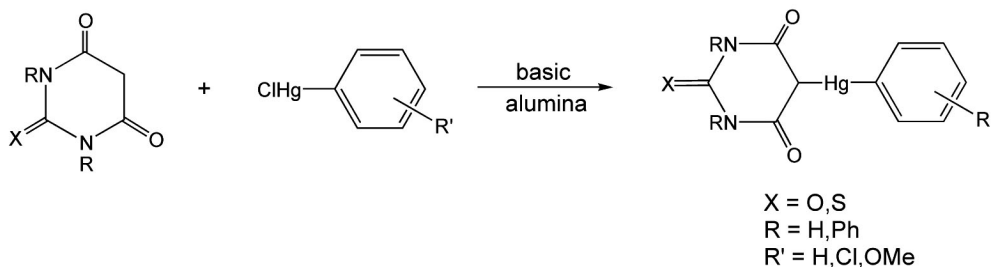
This section will identify and provide examples for each type. For an overview of a wider range of different chemical transformations that can be performed solventless, the reader should consult Chapter 4, as there are over 100 additional solvent-free references.

An increasingly popular solvent-free method is to adsorb reagents onto mineral oxides. The reagent is first dissolved in an appropriate volatile solvent. After the mineral oxide (alumina, silica gel, clay, or zeolites) is added, the solvent is removed by evaporation. The impregnated solid support is then irradiated with microwaves in “dry media”. Upon completion of the reaction, a solvent is added to extract the product(s) from the support. Choice of solid support depends on the type of reaction a chemist is going to perform. Alumina can act as a base, but if a stronger one is needed, potassium fluoride on alumina is extremely basic. Silica gel naturally acts as a weak acid, while some of the montmorillonite clays provide acidities near sulfuric and nitric acids. As a whole, this solid-state application will greatly reduce the amount of solvent used that eventually needs to be properly disposed of and will minimize potentially hazardous reaction conditions.

Kidwai and co-workers have done extensive research in solvent-free reaction chemistry.^{37,104-113,276,290} Scheme 12 shows an example of a microwave-enhanced synthesis to N-acylated cephalosporin derivatives.³⁷ Cephalosporanic acid and a heterocyclic carboxylic

Scheme 12

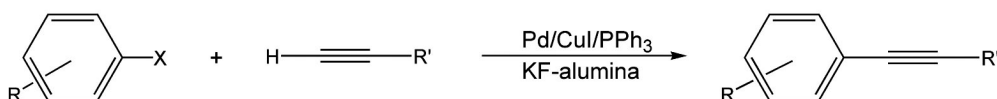


Scheme 13

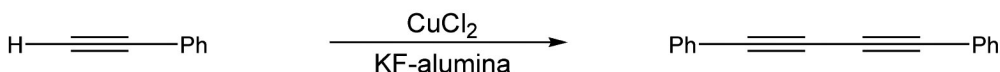
acid were adsorbed onto basic alumina and irradiated with microwaves for 2 minutes to yield the antibacterials in 82-93% yield. With thermal heat, this reaction can take anywhere from two to six hours and provides much lower yields. Another reaction performed on basic alumina is shown in Scheme 13.^{105,113} Barbituric and thiobarbituric acid derivatives are adsorbed onto the alumina with substituted arylmercuric chlorides to yield biologically active fungicides.

Kabalka and co-workers have also explored solvent-less, microwave-enhanced reactions on dry media.⁹⁹⁻

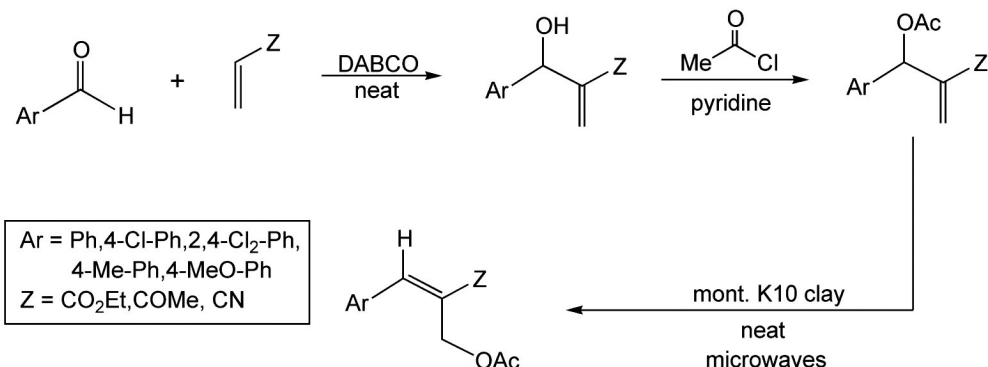
^{101,628-629} Sonogashira coupling reactions are a palladium-catalyzed reaction between terminal alkynes and an aryl halide. These reactions typically employ a solvent and an amine, which produce environmental burdens. Scheme 14 illustrates a Sonogashira coupling that was performed on potassium fluoride/alumina doped with a palladium/copper iodide/triphenylphosphine mixture. The arylalkynes were synthesized in very high yields (82-97%).⁹⁹ Another type of coupling reaction that can be performed in a solvent-free environment is Glaser coupling. This copper-catalyzed coupling of two terminal alkynes produces diacetylene derivatives, which are very important in the polymer and material science industries. Phenylacetylene and copper chloride on potassium fluoride/alumina, coupled with microwave irradiation, give diphenylbutadiyne in a 75% product yield (Scheme 15).

Scheme 14

X = halide

R = H, Me, OMe, F, I, N(Me)₂R' = C₈H₁₇, C₆H₁₃, Ph**Scheme 15**

The Baylis-Hillman reaction is an important carbon-carbon bond forming reaction that forms multi-functional molecules. In this reaction, an aldehyde reacts with an electron deficient alkene to yield allylic alcohol derivatives. Isomerization of acetylated Baylis Hillman adducts will yield (E)-trisubstituted alkenes, which are often difficult to synthesize. Microwave irradiation of the functionalized acetates on montmorillonite K10 clay yields trisubstituted alkenes in 13 minutes (Scheme 16).¹³⁰ The clay acts as a catalyst, since only starting material is recovered in its absence.

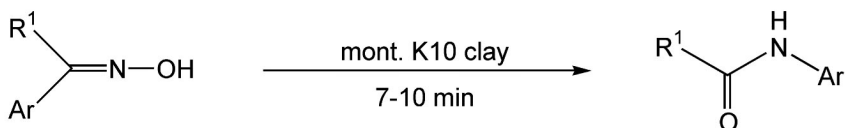
Scheme 16

Another pioneer in microwave-assisted solvent-free reactions is Andre Loupy.^{5,8,45-63,297,310,351,416,425,439,472,491,501,505-507,}

^{522,568,590, 607,657,708,709}

One important reaction that is used frequently in natural product syntheses is the Beckmann rearrangement. This reaction rearranges ketoximes to amides or lactams in the presence of acid. Traditionally, very strong acids are used to promote the rearrangement. Loupy and co-workers have performed facile Beckmann rearrangements on montmorillonite K10 clay under microwave irradiation in high yields (68-96%) (Scheme 17).⁶⁰ Another microwave reaction performed by Loupy et al. in a solventless environment is carbohydrate glycosylation. Scheme 18 illustrates the glycosylation of peracetylated D-glucopyranose with decanol.

Scheme 17



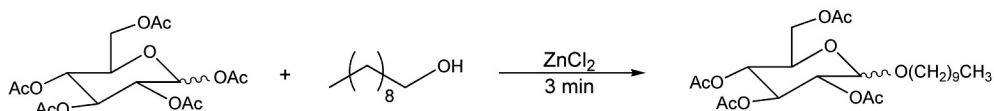
R¹ = Me, Ph

Ar = Ph, *p*-OMeC₆H₄, *p*-ClC₆H₄,

p-NO₂C₆H₄

Microwave: 68-96% yield
Conventional: 17-93% yield

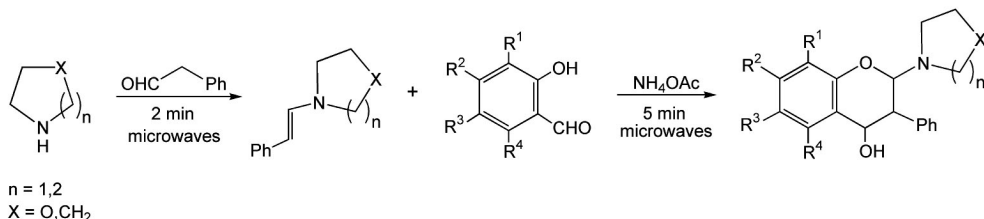
Scheme 18



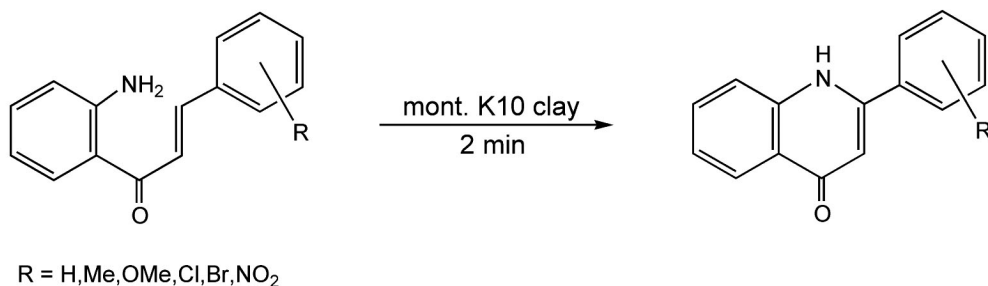
Microwave: 3 min, 74% yield
Conventional: 5 hours, 25% yield

Varma and co-workers have performed extensive research on microwave-assisted, solvent-free reactions in numerous areas including oxidations, reductions, protections, deprotections, and condensations.^{20,84-98} Many of these are discussed in Chapter 4 and include additional references. Another area of interest is the enamine-mediated approach to isoflav-3-ene synthesis. Enamines are traditionally synthesized via azeotropic removal of water and usually require an initial acid catalyst. Scheme 19 shows a microwave-enhanced, solvent-free, one-pot synthesis to isoflav-3-ene derivatives, which takes place in only seven minutes.⁹⁸ An efficient microwave-induced tetrahydroquinolone synthesis effected on clay is completed in only two minutes (Scheme 20).⁹⁶

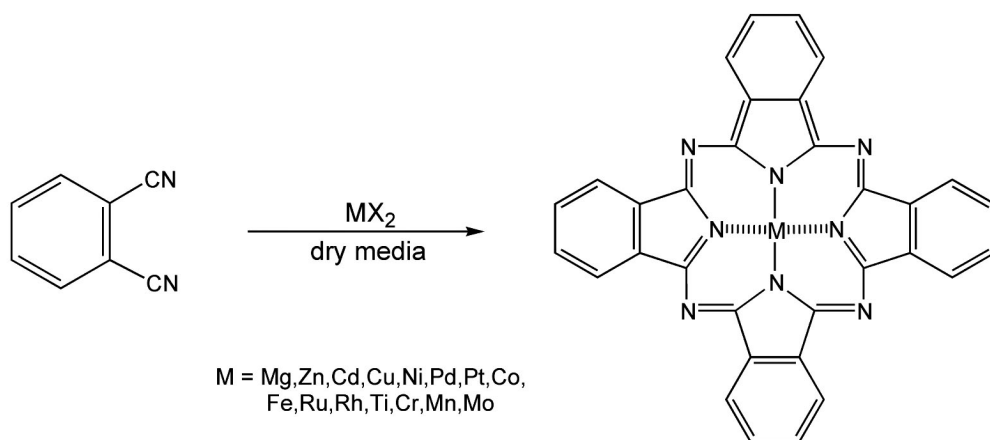
Scheme 19



Scheme 20



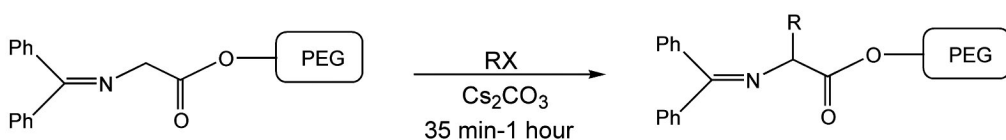
Didier Villemin is yet another researcher who has examined reactions in dry media extensively. Metallophthalocyanines have become important molecules in the material science industries, as they are stable to strong acids and bases, as well as high temperatures. Traditional synthetic routes to phthalocyanines require long reaction times and very high temperatures. Villemin and co-workers have performed one-step metallophthalocyanine syntheses on clay, zirconium phosphate, and encapsulated in zeolite via microwave irradiation (Scheme 21).¹³² These reactions were completed in only five minutes and in quantitative yields.

Scheme 21

Solid-liquid-phase transfer catalysis is another type of solvent-free reaction. With this method, a reagent acts as both a reactant and an organic phase. Microwave irradiation has been used extensively in these types of reactions.^{8,50,66,351,472,483,490,491,505,593} An inexpensive and useful phase transfer catalyst (PTC) is polyethylene glycol (PEG). Medium to high molecular weight PEG is a solid at room temperature, but at 50 °C, it

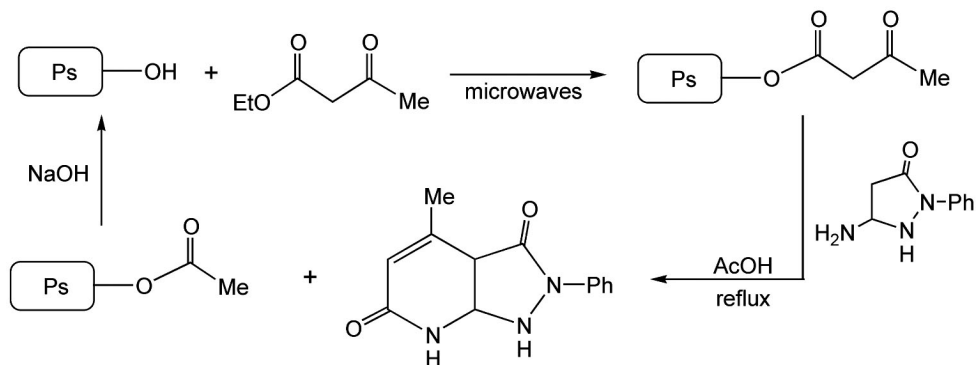
melts to become a liquid. At temperatures above 50 °C, derivatized PEG can be used as a soluble polymeric support in the solution phase, but when cooled to room temperature, it becomes solid and provides for simple purification. Scheme 22 exhibits a PEG-supported alkylation of a Schiff base to aminoacid derivatives under microwave irradiation in 75-98% yield.¹⁶⁶

Scheme 22

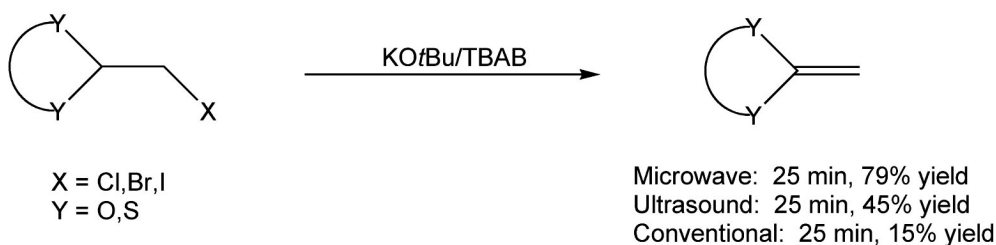


Another useful PTC for microwave-assisted reactions is poly(styrene-co-allyl alcohol) (Ps-OH). This support possesses the properties of both PEG and polystyrene. Vanden Eynde and Rutot rapidly synthesized heterocyclic compounds via supported β -keto esters, with the first step only taking five minutes (Scheme 23).⁴¹ The parent polymer can be regenerated from the resulting acylated polymer by saponification.

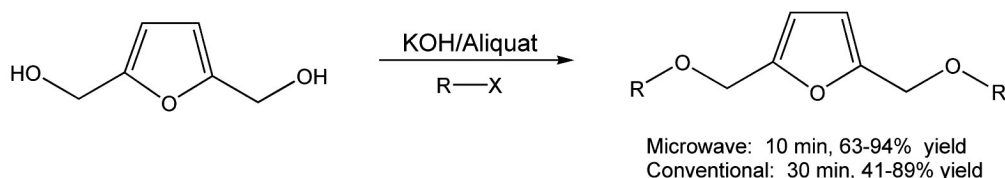
Scheme 23

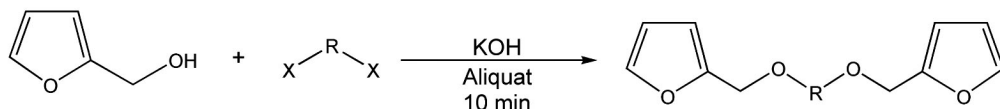


Andre Loupy has also done some interesting research involving phase transfer catalysis coupled with microwave irradiation.^{8,50,62,351,472,491,505,593} β -Elimination of halogenated precursors, with potassium *t*-butoxide/tetrabutylammonium bromide (KO*t*Bu/TBAB) as the PTC, provides a new route to ketene O,O- and S,S-acetals (Scheme 24).⁶² Compared to both conventional and ultrasonic methods, microwave irradiation produced much larger product yields.

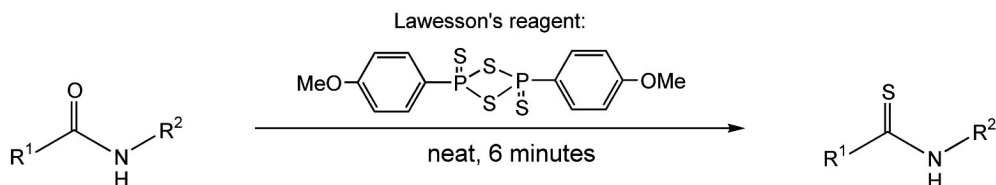
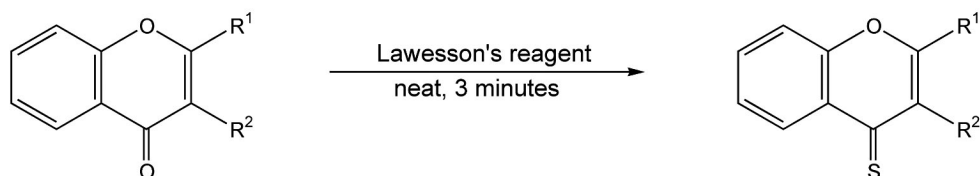
Scheme 24

Another area of interest includes the synthesis of furan diethers. These types of compounds constitute a large percentage of the derivatives that make up biomass, a renewable source of natural products. Loupy and co-workers developed two methods of microwave-assisted phase transfer catalysis for furan synthesis, solid-liquid PTC (solid KOH and Aliquat 336) and liquid-liquid PTC (aqueous KOH and Aliquat 336).³⁵¹ Scheme 25 shows the reaction between 2,5-furandimethanol and an alkyl halide by both PTC methods. Phase transfer catalysis can also benefit the reaction between furfuryl alcohol and a dihalide (Scheme 26).

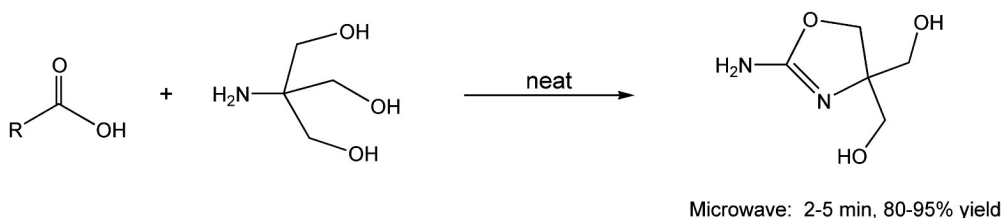
Scheme 25

Scheme 26

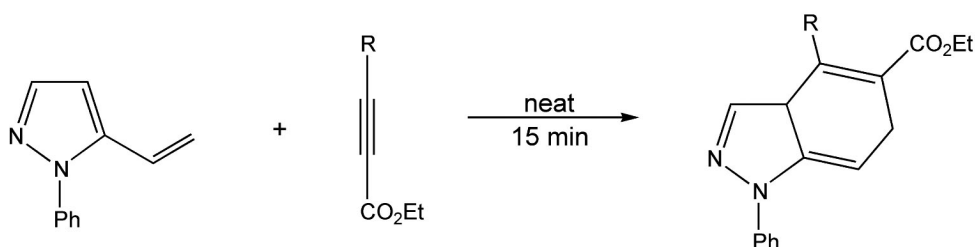
Performing a reaction neat under microwave irradiation is the third type of solvent-free reaction. With this method, neither a mineral oxide nor a PTC is used, and the liquid or solid reagents are used directly from their containers with no dilutions. One interesting neat reaction utilizes Lawesson's reagent, which transforms a carbonyl moiety into its thio analog. Scheme 27 exhibits the microwave-induced conversion of amides to thioamides in six minutes.^{88,165} An additional microwave example converts coumarins and other lactones to their thio derivatives in only 3 minutes with quantitative product yields (Scheme 28).⁸⁸

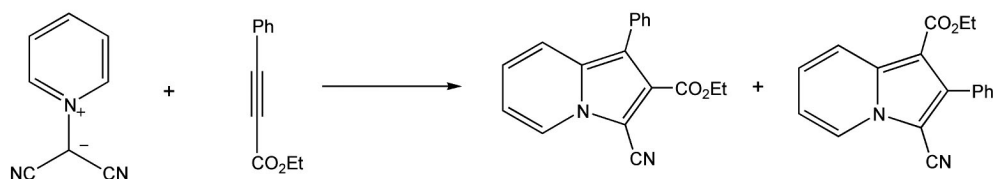
Scheme 27**Scheme 28**

Substituted 2-oxazolines are important heterocyclic intermediates used in drug discovery. Classical syntheses of these compounds require high temperatures, azeotropic water removal, and multi-step procedures. With microwave irradiation, 2-oxazolines are synthesized from the cyclodehydration reaction between a carboxylic acid and α,α,α -tris(hydroxymethyl) methyl amine without any solvent or solid support in 2-5 minutes (Scheme 29).⁵⁷

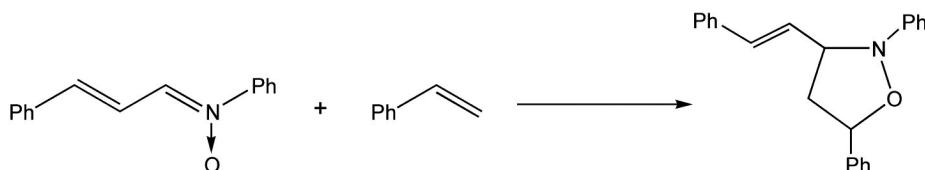
Scheme 29

Both Diels-Alder and 1,3-dipolar cycloadditions benefit from microwave-assisted neat conditions, as they require long reaction times and very high thermal temperatures. In a solventless environment, vinylpyrazoles react with substituted alkynes to yield non-aromatic cycloadducts via microwave irradiation in 15 minutes (Scheme 30).²¹⁴ Schemes 31 and 32 illustrate successful 1,3-dipolar cycloadditions that yielded heterocycles in very high product yields.^{8,364}

Scheme 30

Scheme 31

Microwave: neat, 25 min, 87% yield
 Conventional: neat, 25 min, 61% yield
 Conventional: DMF, 25 min, 15% yield

Scheme 32

Microwave: 6 min, 90% yield
 Conventional: 34 hours, 80% yield
 Ultrasound: 1 hour, 87% yield

Thus, the two main types of conditions used for chemical reactions, those run in the presence of solvent and those run in a solventless environment, are equally important and both can benefit from microwave heating. We have seen that microwave irradiation is not only applicable to standard homogeneous reaction mediums, but to solid-phase systems as well. Most synthetic methods can be executed by at least one of these systems. In conjunction with the following synthesis chapter, a chemist can now develop optimal and efficient synthetic routes.

Chapter 4

Synthetic Applications

In the past five years, there has been an increased demand for large collections of novel drug targets. The long reaction times that are required for conventional heating have led to the advent of new technologies, including combinatorial and parallel chemistry. Combinatorial chemistry allows a chemist to synthesize

As microwave synthesis instrumentation continues to evolve, new applications will be developed for a variety of chemistries and process developing needs.

large libraries of molecules by varying combinations and permutations of different components. Recently, there has been a shift towards parallel synthesis, primarily due to problems with deconvolution of complex combinatorial mixtures. These technologies still require classical thermal heat. The use of microwave chemistry in organic

synthesis has now introduced a completely new approach to drug discovery. Microwave systems provide the opportunity to complete reactions in minutes, offering the option to return to more sequential methods.

This is advantageous because it allows chemists to analyze a reaction before conducting the next step, enabling them to optimize their reactions and their time. This chapter will document the many synthetic applications that have benefited from the use of microwave irradiation. *Note: The reader should assume that all reaction schemes shown in this chapter utilize microwave irradiation. In multi-step schemes, the use of microwave energy is indicated by “microwaves” on the arrow.*

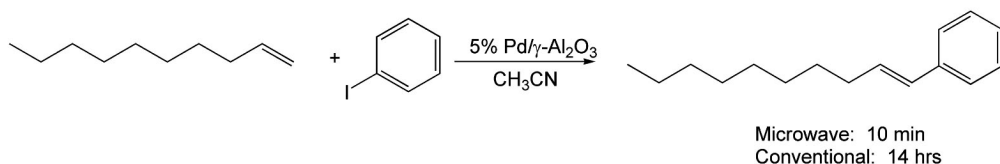
A majority of the applications found in this chapter have been performed in a multi-mode microwave cavity under atmospheric conditions or in sealed glass or TeflonTM vessels, as single-mode reactors may not have been available at the time the work was completed. The rates of reactions performed in a multi-mode cavity are greater than those using conventional methods, but repeatability is low. The reader should also be aware that multi-mode instruments require a lot of power because of their spacious cavity. The total power generated is high, but the power density in the cavity is quite low. A higher power density allows the energy to be more focused in single-mode instrumentation, and 300 W or lower is sufficient. A chemist looking to mimic the conditions found in the references should concentrate on the temperature needed and not the power level.

Chemists have been conducting research in microwave synthesis since the mid-1980s. As a result, there are many articles on the multitude of reactions that can be performed with microwave energy. Older reviews on microwave-enhanced synthetic applications include those by Abramovitch²⁹⁶, Caddick³⁸², Majetich and co-workers^{10,223,182}, Sridar²⁹⁴, and a more recent review by Lidstrom et al.¹⁸³ As microwave synthesis continues to grow in popularity, the applications written for it will multiply as well, though there are many types of reactions investigated in current literature including organometallic, cycloaddition, heterocyclic, oxidations, and condensations.

I. Organometallic cross-coupling reactions

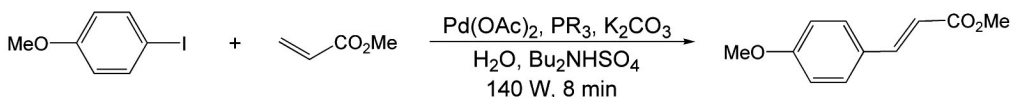
Reactions that form carbon–carbon bonds are of supreme importance in synthetic chemistry. Palladium catalyzed cross-coupling reactions have become a significant part of drug discovery. Heck, Suzuki, and Stille coupling reactions are easily performed with microwave synthesis instrumentation. It was first suggested that microwave irradiation could enhance Suzuki and Stille cross-coupling reactions in June 1988 by Mills and co-workers at Glaxo in London, England.^{184,185} Wali et al. performed the first Heck reaction in a multi-mode cavity in 1995.¹⁸⁶ He reacted iodobenzene with 1-decene (Scheme 33) and was able to get a complete reaction in approximately ten minutes compared to 14 hours with conventional methods.

Scheme 33

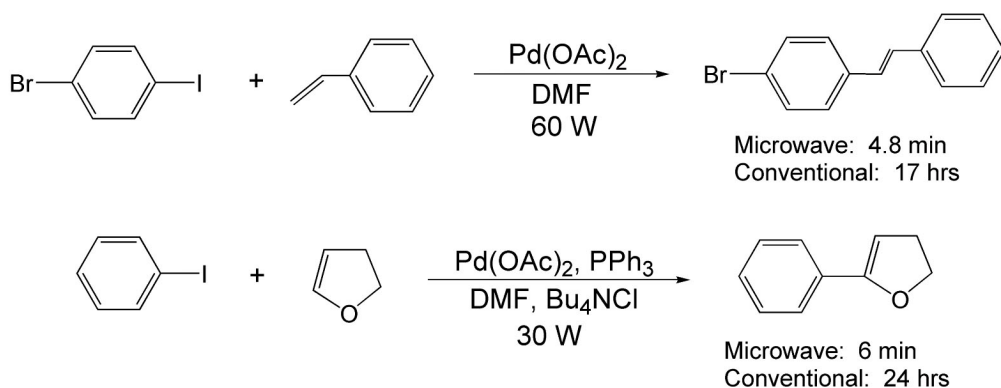
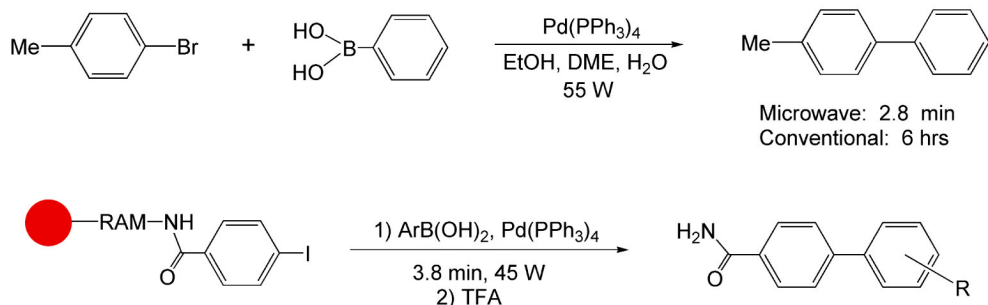


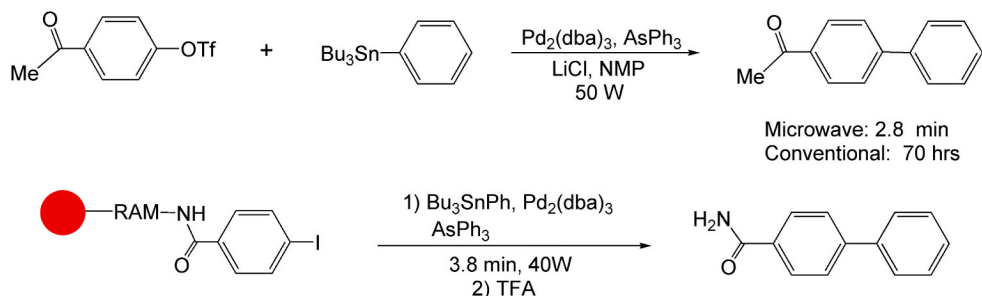
The second microwave work in palladium chemistry was done by Villemin and co-workers in France and presented in 1995 at a conference in Spain.¹⁸⁷ His palladium catalyzed Heck reaction (Scheme 34) was the first reported work in a single-mode cavity. Like Wali, his work yielded results in about 10 minutes, using only 140 W of power.

Scheme 34

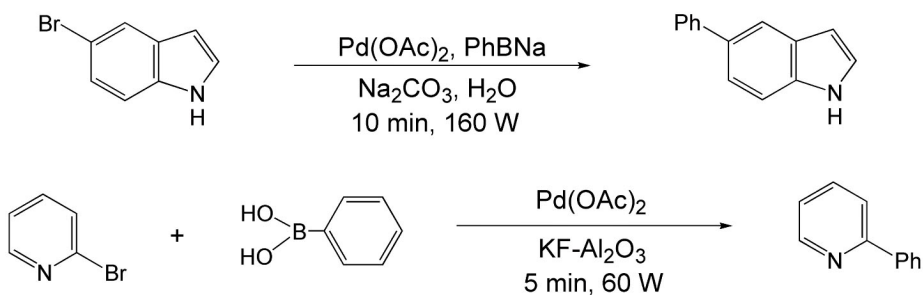
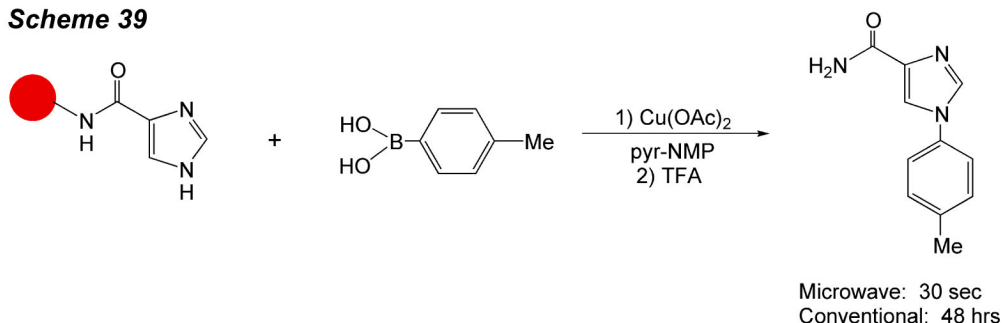


More recently, Larhed and Hallberg, from the University of Upsalla in Sweden, have also explored palladium-coupling Heck reactions (Scheme 35), as well as Suzuki (Scheme 36) and Stille couplings (Scheme 37).^{188,189} Their work, which has been quite extensive, again shows the major advantages in using microwave energy — rapid reaction times and increased yields.^{13,188-201}

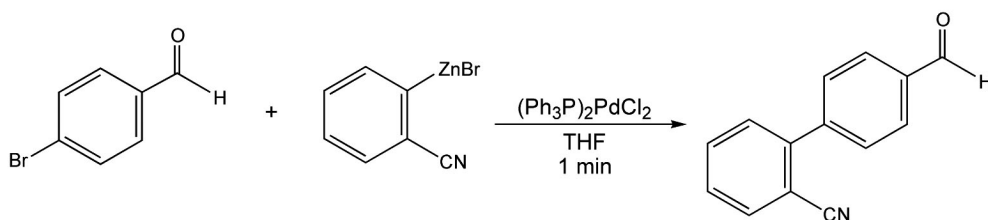
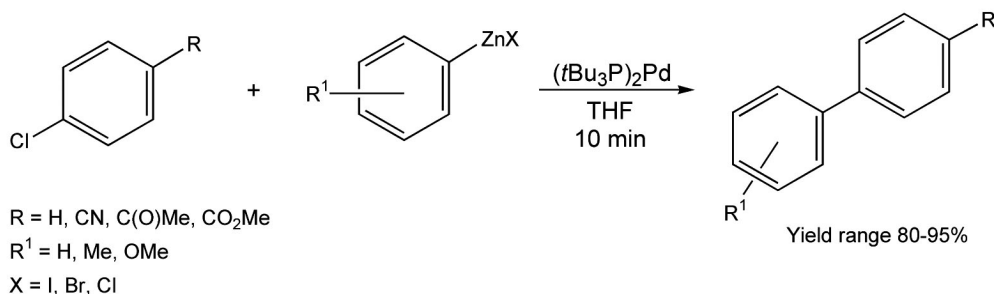
Scheme 35**Scheme 36**

Scheme 37

Other research groups have been working in the areas of heteroaromatic synthesis and aqueous or solvent-free conditions via transition metal cross-coupling reactions.^{99,117,202-207} Villemin and co-workers have executed Suzuki reactions in both water and solvent free conditions (Scheme 38).^{206,207} Alternatively, Combs et al. have performed Suzuki-like reactions using a copper catalyst (Scheme 39).²⁰⁴

Scheme 38**Scheme 39**

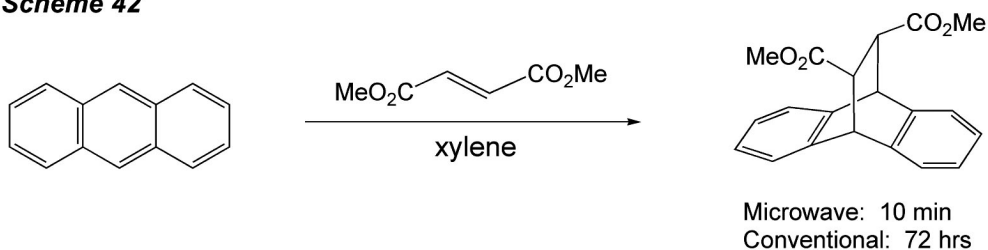
Another area that has been recently explored is microwave-assisted Negishi cross-coupling reactions. The majority of the reactions discussed previously utilize aryl triflates, bromides, and iodides. Aryl and vinyl chlorides, unfortunately, have been quite unsuccessful in coupling reactions. The carbon–chlorine bond has a much larger bond dissociation energy than the others, which makes it harder to break. The Negishi cross-coupling reaction employs organozinc reagents, and it is a powerful solution to this dilemma. It opens up the use of an entire family of chlorides that are inexpensive and commercially available. With conventional heating, the Negishi reaction can require hours of heating for completion. Scheme 40 shows a reaction with an aryl bromide, which was complete in one minute and in a 90% yield.²⁰⁸ The ease of cross-coupling between aryl chloride derivatives and organozinc halides is exhibited in Scheme 41.¹⁸

Scheme 40**Scheme 41**

II. Cycloadditions

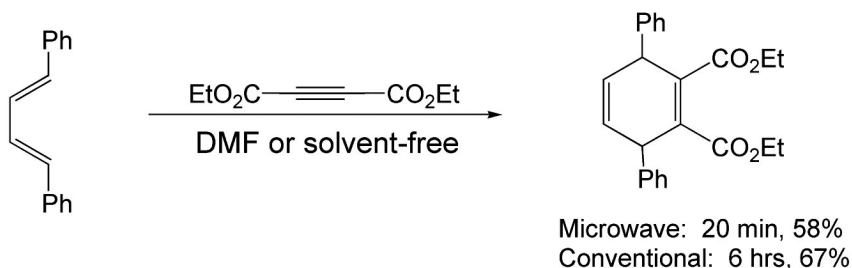
Cycloadditions, which include the Diels-Alder, ene, and Alder-Bong reactions, are important single-step, ring-forming reactions in organic synthesis. These transformations usually require harsh conditions (high pressures and temperatures) and long reaction times. Diels-Alder cycloadditions were the first reaction types to be examined in conjunction with microwave irradiation.^{209-236,262} Giguere et al. showed one of the first examples of a microwave-induced Diels-Alder reaction in 1986 (Scheme 42).³ Irradiating anthracene and dimethyl fumarate in a multi-mode instrument at 600 W gave a complete reaction in 10 minutes compared to 72 hours with conventional heating.

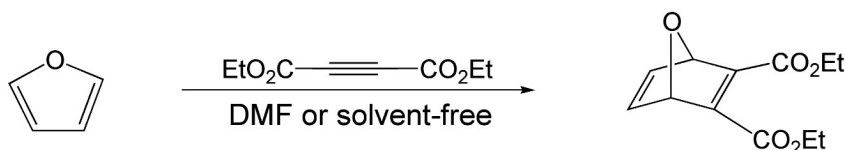
Scheme 42



Majetich and Hicks have also shown successful Diels-Alder reactions.²²³ Both of the transformations shown in Schemes 43 and 44 were executed in DMF or in solvent-free conditions.

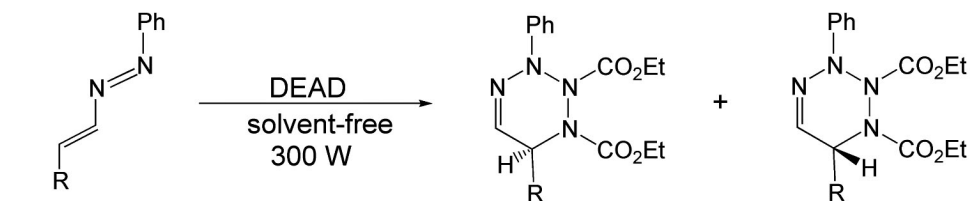
Scheme 43



Scheme 44

Microwave: 10 min, 86%
 Conventional: 15 min, 68%

Microwave heating has also been used extensively in heterocyclic Diels-Alder reactions.^{224-236,263} These reactions are very important in synthetic chemistry, as they enable the synthesis of biologically significant nitrogen-, sulfur-, and oxygen-containing rings, which are usually difficult to achieve by standard methodology. Avalos et al. reacted 1,2-diaza-1,3-butadienes with diethyl azodicarboxylate (DEAD) to form functionalized tetrazines (Scheme 45).²²⁴ Under conventional heating, these reactions take 30 days for completion, whereas with microwave irradiation, they were performed in 15 minutes.

Scheme 45

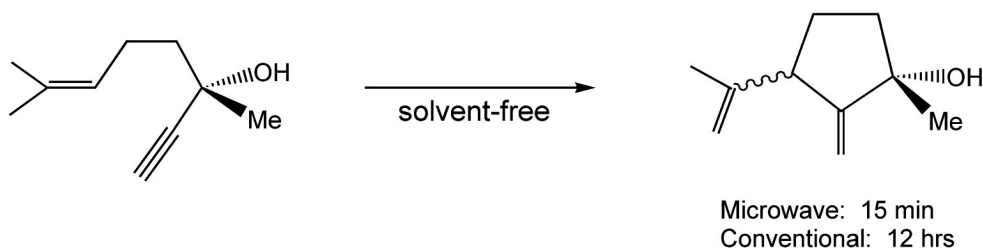
R = carbohydrate

Microwave: 15 min
 Conventional: 30 days

The ene reaction is a reaction between an alkene and an enophile (analogous to a dienophile in a Diels-Alder reaction). A new C–C bond is formed, and the position of the original double bond shifts through a cyclic transition state. Intramolecular reactions are entropically more favorable, but they still require long reaction

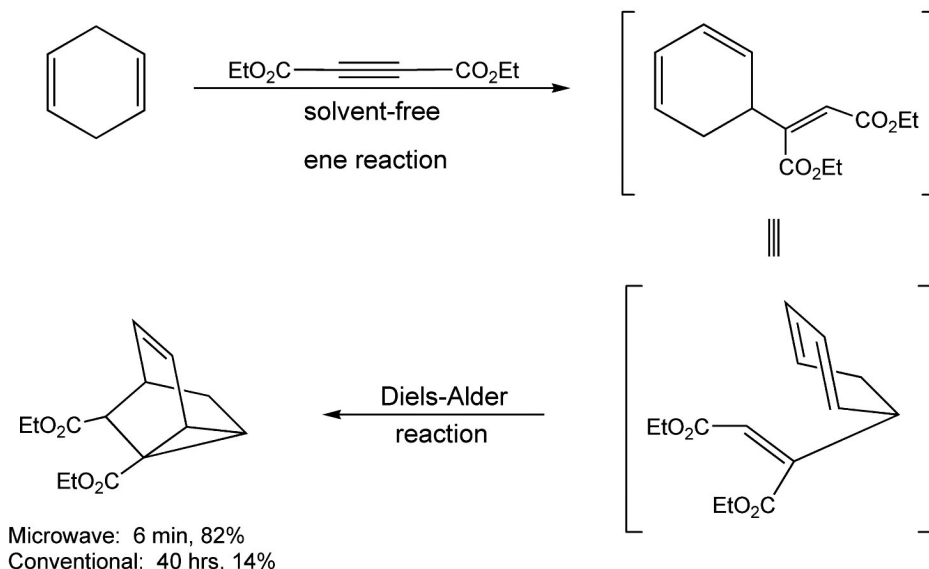
times to complete. One example of an intramolecular ene reaction is shown in Scheme 46.³ With microwave irradiation, this solvent-free reaction only took 15 minutes compared to 12 hours with conventional methods.

Scheme 46



The Alder-Bong reaction is another interesting cycloaddition reaction. In this particular reaction, an ene reaction is followed by an intramolecular Diels-Alder reaction. The Diels-Alder reaction proceeds rapidly, thus the intermediates formed from the ene reaction cannot be isolated. Scheme 47 shows a reaction

Scheme 47



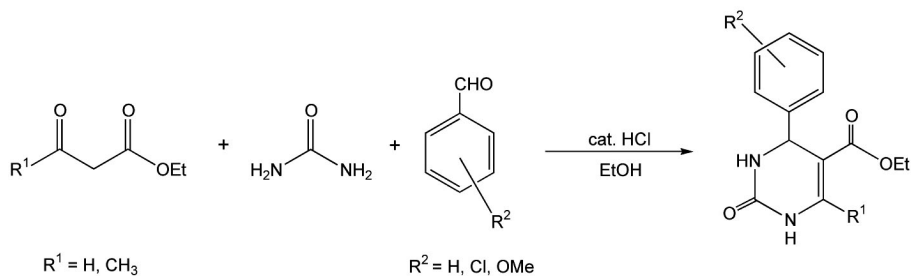
between 1,4-cyclohexadiene and diethyl acetylene dicarboxylate.²³⁷ With conventional heating methods, this reaction takes 40 hours to complete. With microwave irradiation, it proceeds in 20 minutes, solvent-free.

III. Heterocycles

Heterocyclic chemistry is another area of importance in synthetic chemistry. A large number of natural products and target drug compounds contain a heterocyclic core. Synthetic routes toward these compounds are usually quite challenging. Microwave-induced heterocyclic chemistry has been extensively examined with pyrimidine derivatives^{49,125,130,131,169,238-251}, pyrroles²⁵²⁻²⁵⁷, pyridines^{59,64,68,108,258-274}, β -lactams^{11,111,275-286}, indoles²⁸⁷⁻²⁹⁸, γ -carbolines²⁹⁹, quinolines and quinolones^{47,96,110,112,113,118,300-303}, quinazolines^{67,304-309}, imidazoles^{133,155-156,258,264,265,310-327}, other azole/azoline derivatives^{57,58,64,71,106,107,109,119,133,327-348}, furans³⁴⁹⁻³⁵³, and 1,3-dipolar cycloadducts^{61-63,155,157,177,355-378}.

The Biginelli three-component condensation reaction is a one-pot synthesis to dihydropyrimidines. These heterocyclic systems contribute to enhanced pharmacological efficiency in a variety of biological effects, including antiviral, antitumor, antibacterial, and anti-inflammatory activities. With normal conventional heating, these reactions can take approximately 24 hours

Scheme 48

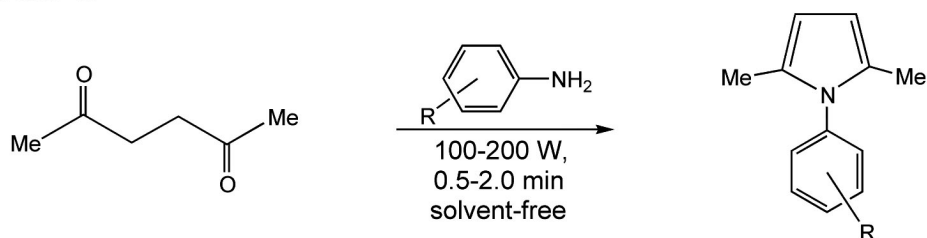


Microwave: 5 min, 60-90% yield
Conventional: 12-24 hours, 15-60% yield

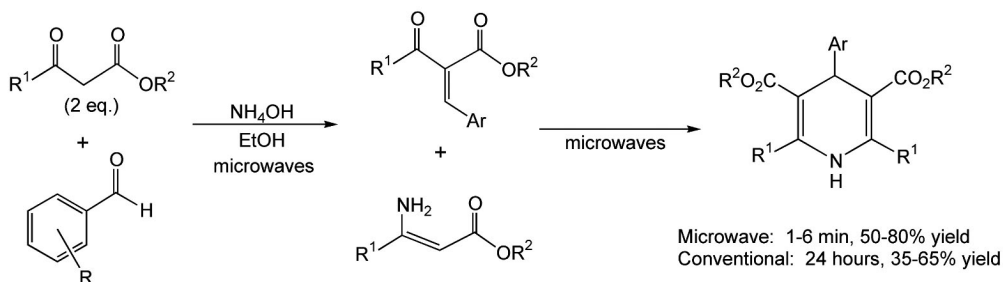
for complete transformation with only low to moderate yields. Upon microwave irradiation, the Biginelli reaction was successfully completed in five minutes, with 60-90% yields (Scheme 48).³⁵⁴

The Paal-Knorr condensation/cyclization reacts 1,4-diketones with primary amines to form N-substituted pyrroles. This synthesis requires at least twelve hours of prolonged thermal heating and added Lewis acids to activate the diketones. With microwaves, transformation occurred in anywhere from 30 seconds to two minutes with very high yields (75-90%) (Scheme 49).²⁵⁵

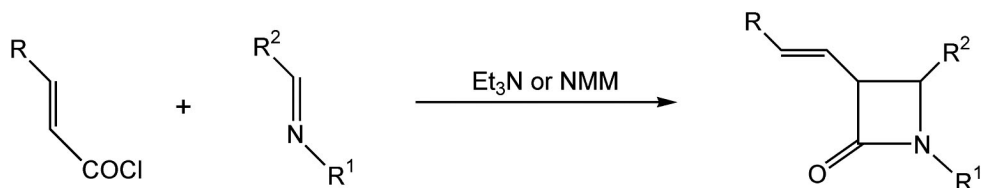
Scheme 49



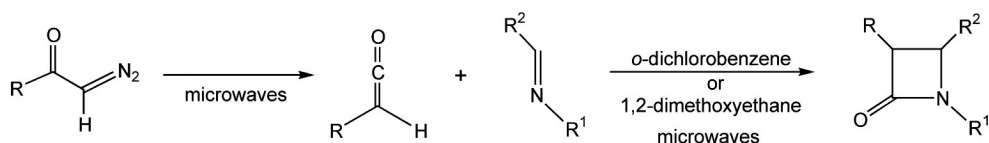
Substituted dihydropyridines are known to be calcium channel blockers and are quite biologically active. They can be synthesized via the one-pot Hantzsch pyridine reaction. In this particular reaction, an aldehyde, two equivalents of a β -ketoester, and ammonium hydroxide are combined in the same reaction vessel. One equivalent of the β -ketoester and the aldehyde undergo an aldol condensation. The other equivalent reacts with the ammonium hydroxide to yield an enamine. The final transformation, as shown in Scheme 50, results in a dihydropyridine derivative. Classical thermal heating takes over 24 hours, whereas these reactions occur in five minutes or less with microwave irradiation.^{259,260,267}

Scheme 50

For decades, synthetic and medicinal chemists have been greatly interested in β -lactams. These four membered chiral heterocycles are versatile synthons in natural product synthesis. Additionally, they can easily undergo rearrangements to yield other heterocyclic and acyclic compounds. Bose and coworkers have done extensive research on microwave-induced β -lactam synthesis.^{11,278,279,282,283,285} Their early work on β -lactams via conductive heating led to extremely low yields. Utilization of microwave heating for five minutes on an α,β -unsaturated acid chloride and a Schiff base (imine) provides β -lactams in 65-70% yield (Scheme 51). Another synthetic strategy to β -lactams utilizes diazoketones (Scheme 52).²⁷⁵ Upon irradiation with microwaves, the diazoketone compound is transformed into a ketene, which then rapidly cyclizes with the imine to yield a β -lactam. Classical conditions rarely yielded a product, whereas microwave irradiation produced 60-80% yield of β -lactam.

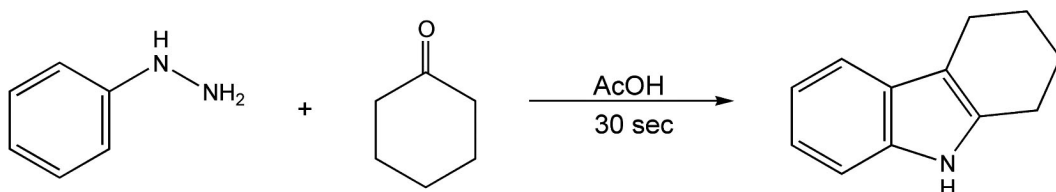
Scheme 51

Scheme 52

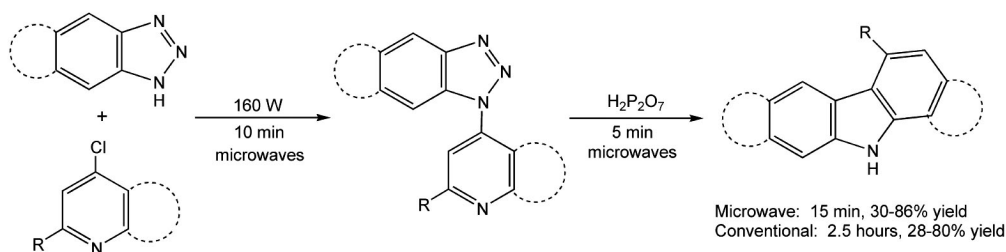


The Fisher indole cyclization is a one-pot reaction to substituted indolic compounds. This powerful synthetic reaction utilizes an arylhydrazone and an aldehyde or ketone. After a [3,3]-sigmatropic rearrangement, elimination of ammonia yields an indole. Microwave irradiation greatly accelerates (385-fold rate enhancement) this rearrangement, resulting in successful completion of the reaction in less than 30 seconds (Scheme 53).²⁹⁴⁻²⁹⁶

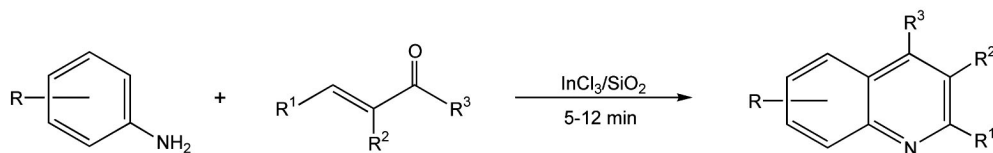
Scheme 53

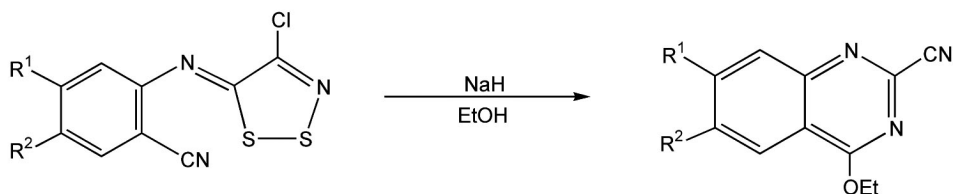


The Graebe-Ullmann synthesis, which yields γ -carboline, is another one-pot reaction. This two-step procedure firsts reacts benzotriazole with a 4-chloropyridine followed by polyphosphoric acid addition to produce thermolytic ring closure. Traditionally, both steps require extremely high temperatures for reaction to occur, and the yields are very dependent on temperature control. With microwave heating, the first step occurs in ten minutes (160 W), plus an additional five minutes (or until nitrogen evolution ceases), after the addition of polyphosphoric acid (Scheme 54).²⁹⁹

Scheme 54

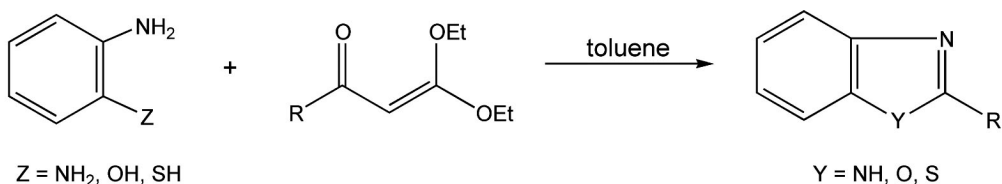
Quinolines and quinazolines are hetero-bicyclic ring systems containing one and two nitrogen atoms, respectively. These compounds and their derivatives have been shown significant interest by medicinal chemists because of the numerous natural products and potential drug compounds that contain their heterocyclic core. The classic Skraup quinoline synthesis requires large amounts of sulfuric acid and high temperatures, which can be quite a violent combination, and usually does not produce satisfactory yields. With microwave irradiation, it has been reported that an aniline, an alkyl vinyl ketone, and indium(III) chloride (catalyst) on silica gel provide 4-alkylquinolines in 80-90% yield (Scheme 55).³⁰⁰ Quinazolines can be synthesized from an N-arylimino dithiazole derivative and sodium hydride in refluxing ethanol. Reaction times were greatly reduced from 40 hours to two hours with microwave energy (Scheme 56).³⁰⁴

Scheme 55

Scheme 56

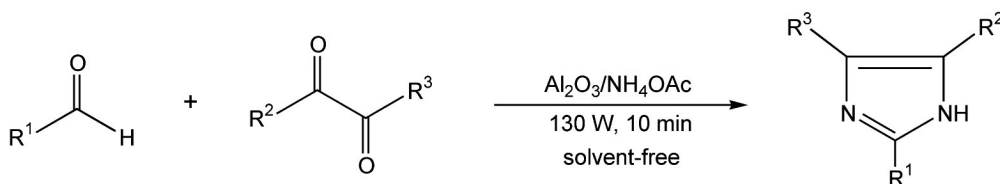
Microwave: 35-120 min, 30-80% yield
Conventional: 40 hours, 30-80% yield

Azole derivatives — which include imidazoles, oxazoles, thiazoles, and tri/tetraazoles — are five-membered rings containing at least two heteroatoms, one being nitrogen. Once again, these compounds contain very important heterocyclic cores that are common in drugs and natural products. Benzimidazoles, -oxazoles, and -thiazoles can be easily synthesized from *o*-arylenediamines or other *o*-arylene heteronucleophiles and a substituted acetylketene diethyl acetal with microwave irradiation

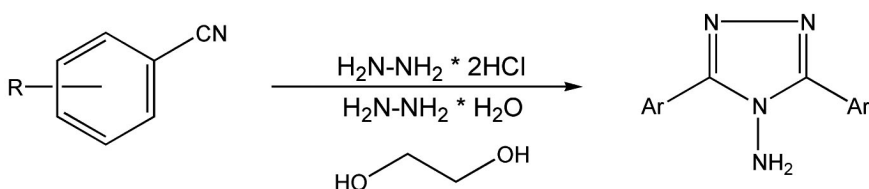
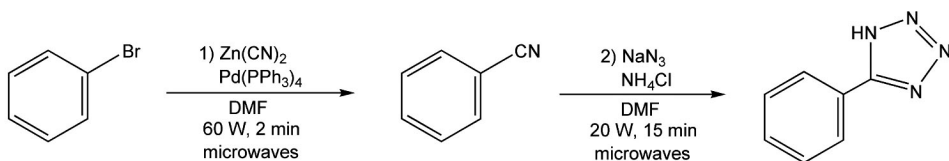
Scheme 57

(Scheme 57).³²⁷ No reaction occurred with thermal heat.

Another route to substituted imidazoles can be accomplished by condensation of a 1,2-dicarbonyl compound with an aldehyde and ammonia. Classically, this reaction requires four hours of intense heating in acetic acid. With microwave irradiation, imidazoles were produced in 20 minutes (Scheme 58).³¹⁶

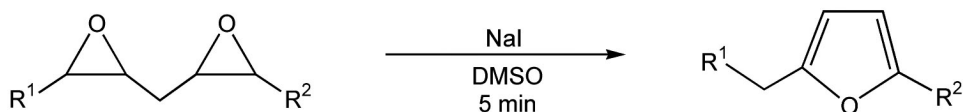
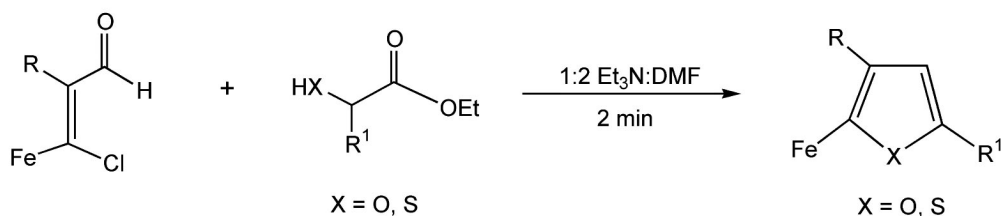
Scheme 58

Triazoles and tetrazoles contain, as their prefixes indicate, three and four nitrogen atoms, respectively. Treatment of aryl nitriles with hydrazine dichloride and hydrazine hydrate in ethylene glycol provides substituted 1,2,4-triazoles. Conventional methods require 45-60 minutes of intense heating and provide moderate yields. Microwave irradiation produced the triazole products in about five minutes (Scheme 59).³⁴⁵ Tetrazoles can also be synthesized from nitriles, these via palladium-catalyzed cyanation of organo bromides with zinc cyanide. Subsequent addition of sodium azide and ammonium chloride yield tetrazoles. Conductive heating usually takes from seven hours to four days, while microwaves yielded product in 15 minutes (Scheme 60).³⁴⁸

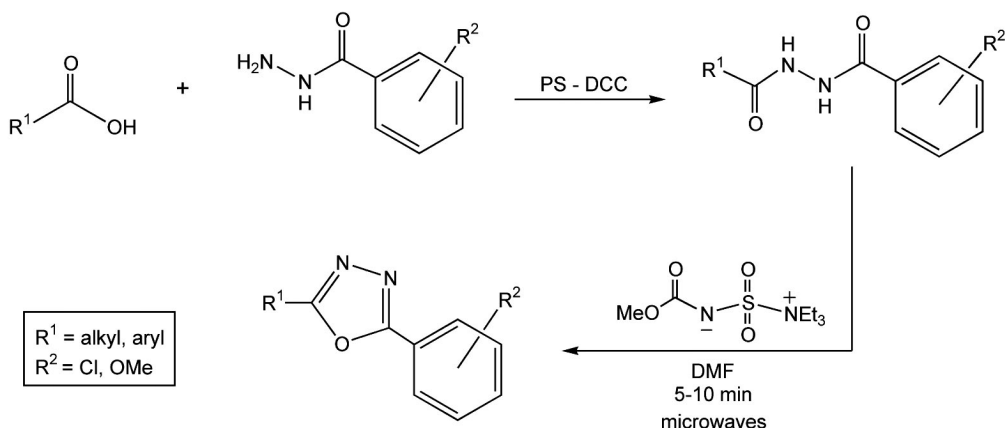
Scheme 59**Scheme 60**

Microwave: 10-15 min, 50-98%
Conventional: 7-96 hours, 35-97%

Furans also contain a common heterocyclic core that is seen in many natural products and drug compounds. Diepoxides, in the presence of sodium iodide, rearrange to form substituted furan ethers. Using thermal heat, this reaction proceeds in five hours with only a 43% yield. With microwave irradiation, rearrangement only took five minutes with an 88% product yield (Scheme 61).³⁵² Additionally, ferrocenyl substituted acrylaldehydes react with a β -hydroxy (or thiol) ester to yield furans (thiophenes) in two minutes under microwave heating (Scheme 62).³⁵³ Conventional methods require 24 hours of reflux.

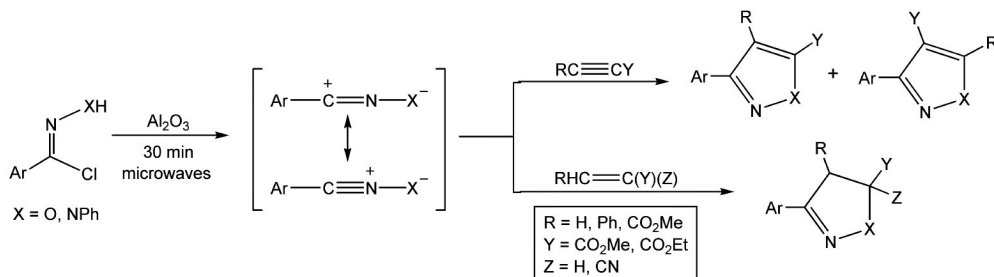
Scheme 61**Scheme 62**

A 1,3,4-oxadiazole synthesis, as shown in Scheme 63, was executed in two steps.³⁵⁴ The second stage of this reaction was performed, first, with conventional heating methods at 150 °C for 90 minutes. In a separate reaction using microwave energy, the second stage was completed at the same temperature, but it only took five to ten minutes. This reaction was 100-fold faster, even though the measured bulk temperatures were the same.

Scheme 63

Another organic transformation that benefits from the use of microwave irradiation is a 1,3-dipolar reaction.^{23,61-63,155,157,177,355-378} These types of reactions are cycloadditions, but they are being discussed in this section because they form heterocyclic moieties. One of the main reactants, which are generated in situ, is a 1,3-dipole. 1,3-Dipoles are heteroatom molecules that contain both a positive and a negative charge. Due to ionic conduction, these ionic species will directly interact with the microwave energy being applied. They readily react with a dipolarophile, which is usually an electrophilic alkene or alkyne, to form heterocyclic ring systems. Using conventional methods, these cycloadditions can take 1-2 days. In Scheme 64, nitrile oxides ($X = O$) and nitrile imines ($X = NPh$) are irradiated with microwaves to yield different heterocyclic compounds in only 30 minutes.³⁵⁵

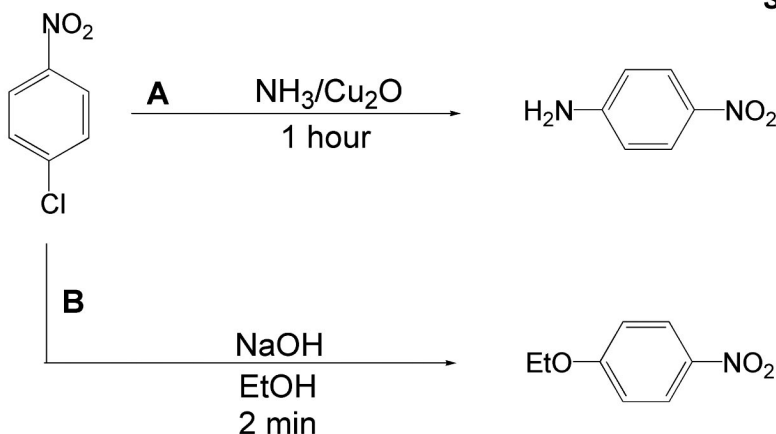
Scheme 64



IV. Nucleophilic additions and substitutions

Nucleophilic addition and substitution reactions, both aromatic and aliphatic, encompass a large number of synthetic transformations. Microwave irradiation has been used extensively to enhance nucleophilic aromatic substitutions^{40,110,379-387}, Michael additions^{148,192,388-402}, Mitsunobu reactions⁴⁰³, hydroacylations⁴⁰⁴, N-acylations^{41,42,90,405-422}, acetylations⁴²²⁻⁴²⁴, carbon^{382,389,425-439} and heteroatom alkylations (N^{66,172,265,317,421,439-464}, S⁴⁶⁵⁻⁴⁶⁹, O^{53-54,134,179,351,380,425,464,470-485}), Williamson etherifications^{4,10,11,223,486-491}, esterifications^{56,423,492-506}, transesterifications^{41,158,507,508}, halogenations^{10,181,223,510-518}, and ¹⁸F-radiolabeling^{519,520}.

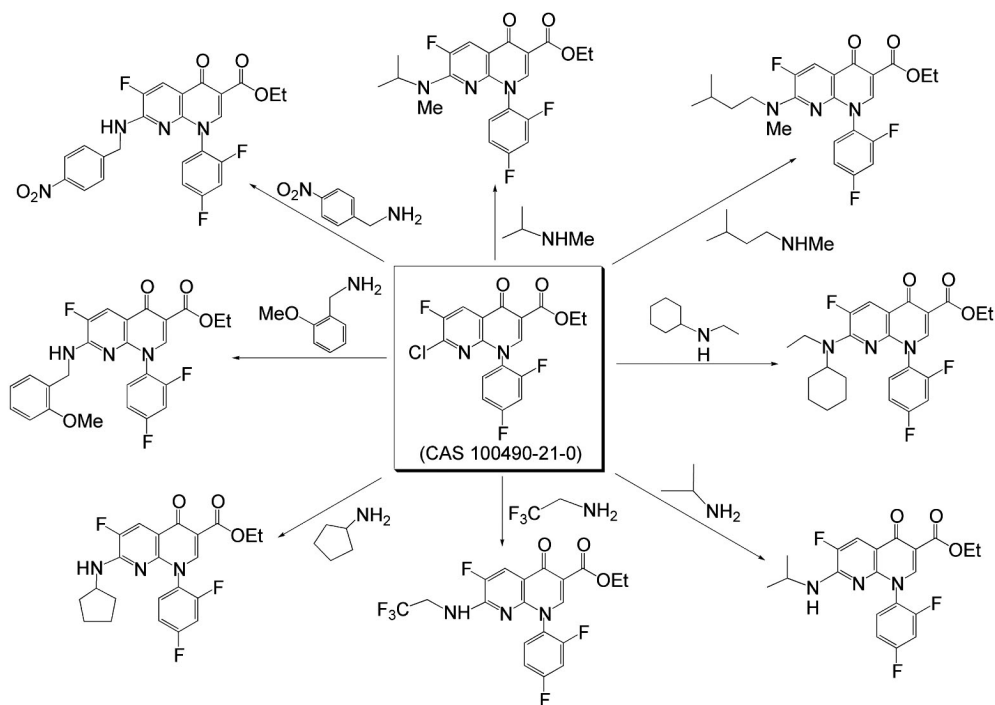
Nucleophilic aromatic substitution ($\text{S}_{\text{N}}\text{Ar}$) reactions play an important role in drug discovery. A large number of drug compounds contain multiple aromatic rings. $\text{S}_{\text{N}}\text{Ar}$ allows an organic chemist a facile route to changing substituents on the ring systems. Classically, $\text{S}_{\text{N}}\text{Ar}$ requires long reaction times and high temperatures and provide low to moderate product yields. Scheme 65 shows two different substitutions on 1-chloro-4-nitrobenzene. Route **A** shows a substitution to an amine with ammonia and copper(I) oxide.³⁸¹ With microwave irradiation, this transformation is successfully completed in one hour with a 93% product yield. Likewise, in route **B**, replacing the chlorine substituent with an ethoxy group forms an ether quantitatively in only two minutes.³⁸²

Scheme 65

Scheme 66 exhibits a small library of heterocyclic compounds that were synthesized using $\text{S}_{\text{N}}\text{Ar}$.³⁵⁴ Starting from one common aromatic scaffold; different amines were added, individually, to yield a small family of eight compounds. Using microwave instrumentation, this entire library was achieved in less than 90 minutes, whereas with conventional methods, this could take many days to complete. Additionally, the yields of this reaction greatly increased from as high as 60% with conventional heating to quantitative yields with microwave irradiation.

The Michael reaction forms the basis for many synthetic transformations. It involves a conjugate 1,4-addition of a nucleophile to an α,β -unsaturated ketone, aldehyde, amide, nitrile, nitride, sulfoxide, or sulfone. Scheme 67 shows an example of a Michael addition reaction between two indoles.³⁸⁸ Bis(indole) molecules have recently been isolated from sponges and are known bioactive metabolites. In this particular reaction, both the nitrovinylindole and alkylindole are adsorbed on silica gel and then subjected to microwave irradiation for 7-10 minutes. Using conventional methods, these additions proceeded in considerably longer reaction times, 8-14 hours.

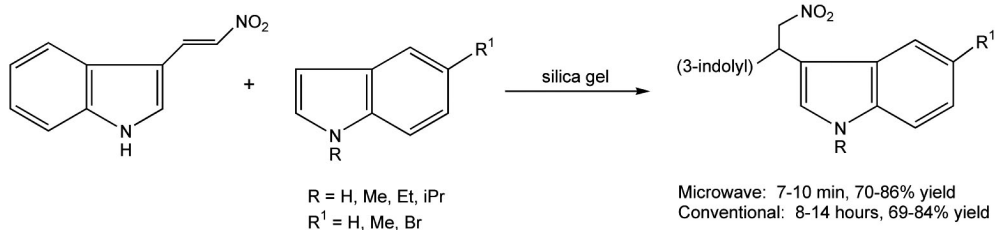
Scheme 66



Microwave: 1.2 eq. amine, MeCN, 175°C, 10 min. All reactions afforded quantitative yields, based on LCMS.

Conventional: 100°C, 12-24 hours, 35-60% yield

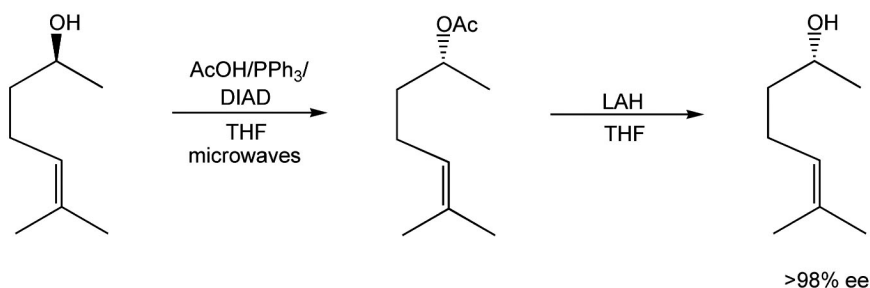
Scheme 67



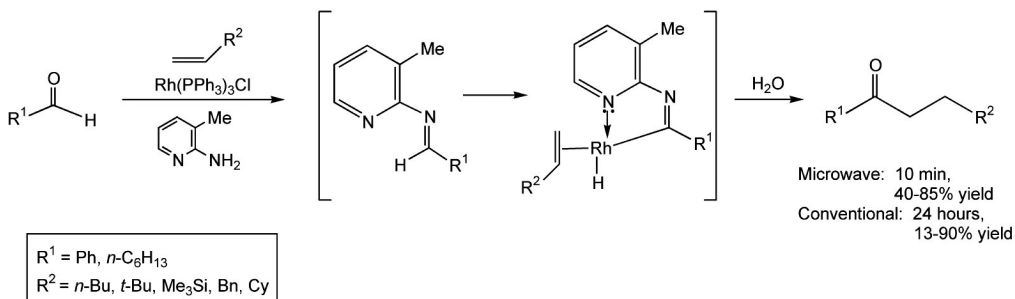
Microwave: 7-10 min, 70-86% yield
Conventional: 8-14 hours, 69-84% yield

Mitsunobu reactions are powerful synthetic transformations that can invert stereochemical configurations. Microwave irradiation has been used to enhance these conversions, as classical methods usually require

high temperatures and long reaction times. Scheme 68 exhibits the acetylation of (*S*)-sulcatol via microwave enhanced Mitsunobu conditions (triphenylphosphine/diisopropyl azodicarboxylate) with acetic acid followed by lithium aluminum hydride (LAH) reduction to (*R*)-sulcatol.⁴⁰³

Scheme 68

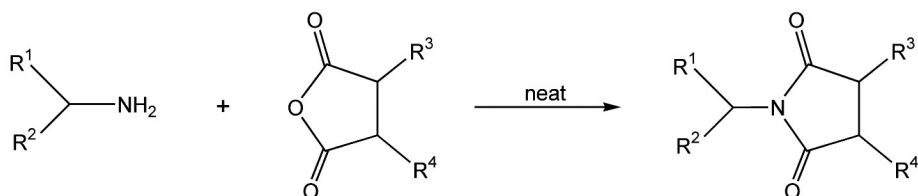
Acylation [$-\text{C}(\text{O})\text{R}$] and acetylation [$-\text{C}(\text{O})\text{Me}$] are useful synthetic methods for obtaining ketones, amides, and enol esters. In hydroacylation reactions, aldehydes and olefins yield ketones via C–H bond activation by transition metals. Scheme 69 shows an efficient synthesis to ketones utilizing both Wilkinson's rhodium(I) catalyst and 2-amino-3-picoline.⁵ The aldimine intermediate

Scheme 69

undergoes cyclometallation with the rhodium catalyst, which is then followed by alkene coordination. Alkene insertion followed by reductive elimination yields a ketone.⁴⁰⁴ Thermal methods can take 24 hours, but those reaction times have been reduced to four hours with a benzoic acid catalyst. With microwave heating, the reaction proceeds in ten minutes with moderate to high product yields.

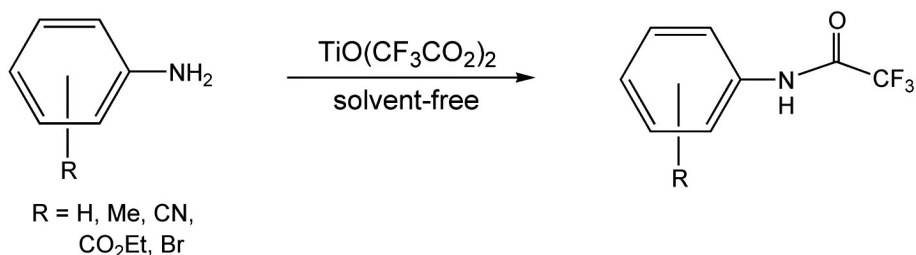
Conversion of amines to amides is the most widely used protection method for amino groups. N-acylation of amines to maleimides is useful and can be enhanced with microwave heating (Scheme 70).⁴⁰⁵⁻⁴¹⁰ Trifluoroacetylation is quite convenient in organic synthesis because of its facile cleavage. This acetylation is usually achieved with trifluoroacetic anhydride, but having trifluoroacetic acid as a byproduct causes one to look for alternative methods. The use of $\text{TiO}(\text{CF}_3\text{CO}_2)$ provides a solution, as titanium oxide and water are the only byproducts. The use of this reagent on both primary and secondary amines, coupled with 5-10 minutes of microwave irradiation, gives trifluoroacetamides in excellent yields (Schemes 71 and 72).⁴²² Use of conventional heating with the same reagents and reaction conditions takes at least 48 hours.

Scheme 70

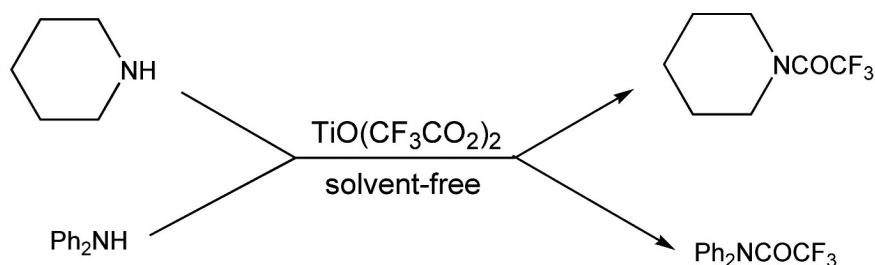


Scheme 71

1° amines:

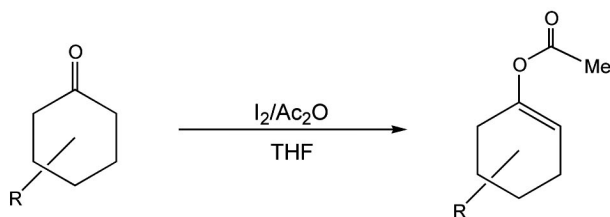
**Scheme 72**

2° amines:



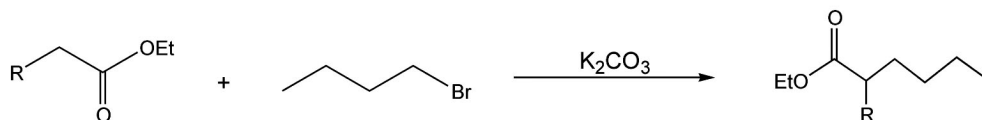
Enol-acetylation of ketones is a valuable transformation in organic chemistry. The enol ethers that are formed are used extensively as intermediates in synthetic routes. Despite their popular usage, preparation methods are limited. A common procedure involves acetic anhydride with a basic or acid catalyst. These catalysts are very strong and can cause sensitive compounds to decompose. Scheme 73 shows a mild procedure that selectively acetylates six-membered cyclic ketones.⁴²³ With conductive heating, the cyclohexanone derivatives were refluxed in THF with acetic anhydride and iodine for 8 hours and gave very low product yields. Alternatively, quantitative yields were produced with microwave irradiation in only five to ten minutes.

Scheme 73

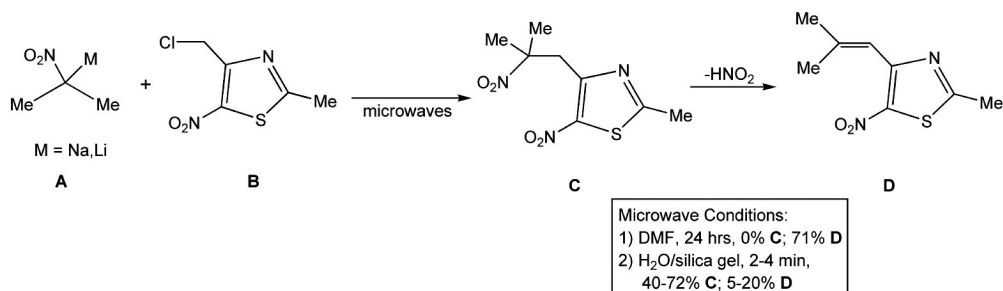


Carbon-alkylations are also important reactions in organic chemistry. The most common and well-known method is by deprotonating a carbon that is adjacent to an electron-withdrawing group (e.g. enolate formation). Scheme 74 shows alkyl addition to a substituted acetate.³⁸² With microwave heating, this reaction proceeded in 3 minutes with high product yields. Another example of C-alkylation is the addition of a 2-nitropropane anion (**A**) with a heterocyclic electrophile (**B**) (Scheme 75). The solvent conditions determine whether the final product is **C** or **D**, which is formed from subsequent elimination of nitrous acid from **C**.⁴²⁶

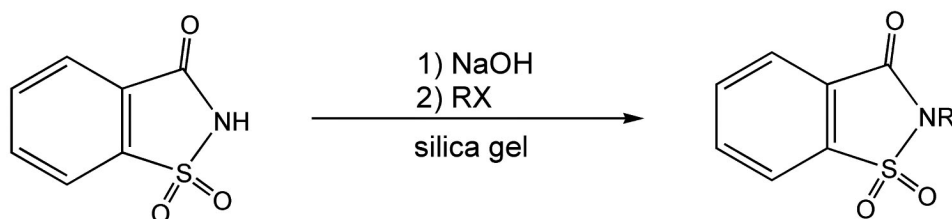
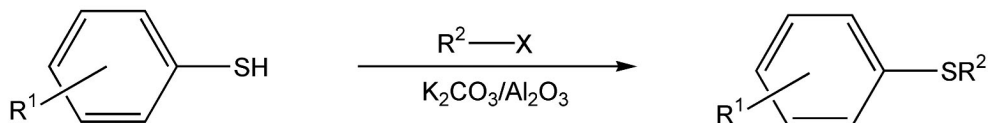
Scheme 74



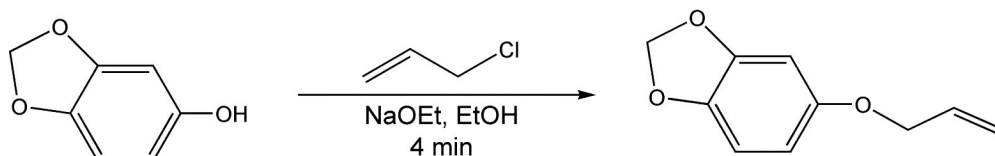
Scheme 75



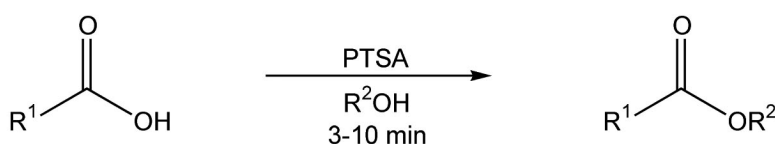
Heterocyclic alkylation reactions also benefit from microwave irradiation. Saccharin can easily be alkylated with any alkyl halide under microwaves in only ten minutes (Scheme 76).⁴⁴⁵ The saccharin is first treated with base to form the sodium salt, which is then adsorbed on silica gel. This reaction is solvent-free and gives a 91% yield. Thiols can also be alkylated in near quantitative yield with alkyl halides via potassium carbonate on alumina (Scheme 77).⁴⁵⁰

Scheme 76**Scheme 77**

Oxygen-alkylation of phenolic compounds is a versatile approach to aryl ethers. These compounds are the basis of many pharmaceutical templates that are used in drug discovery. With conductive heating, these reactions can take anywhere from one to seven days for completion. Microwave-enhanced transformations of a polymer-bound base (PTBD) with phenols occur in less than 30 minutes (Scheme 78).³⁵⁴

Scheme 80

Esters are very important organic molecules in both the chemical and pharmaceutical industry. Esterification of carboxylic acids, alkylation of carboxylate anions, and transesterifications are the three types of methods for ester synthesis. Fisher esterification reactions are direct transformations of carboxylic acids in a sulfuric acid/alcohol mixture. With conventional heating, these conditions are harsh and can take anywhere from two hours to two days. Loupy et al. using microwave irradiation and *p*-toluenesulfonic acid (PTSA), provided esters in near quantitative yields in ten minutes or less (Scheme 81).⁵⁰⁷

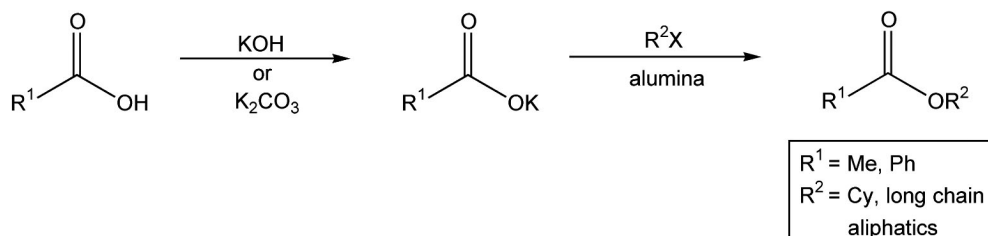
Scheme 81

$R^1 = \text{Ph}, (\text{Me})_3\text{Ph}, \text{aliphatic chains}$ $R^2 = \text{Cy}, \text{Pr}, \text{Bu}, \text{and longer aliphatics}$

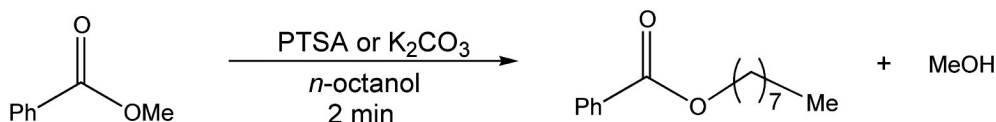
Alkylation of carboxylate anions is another routine transformation to esters. Once again, Loupy and colleagues have extensively examined this area of esterification.⁵⁰⁵⁻⁵⁰⁷ Both potassium acetate ($R_1 = \text{Me}$) and potassium benzoate

($R_1 = \text{Ph}$), first generated in situ with either potassium hydroxide or potassium carbonate, were mixed with different alkyl halides. Under thermal conditions, esters are achieved in five hours; however, microwave-driven substitutions proceeded in 5-15 minutes on alumina (Scheme 82). Loupy and co-workers have also investigated microwave irradiation in transesterifications reactions.⁵⁰⁷ These reactions can be catalyzed by either an acid or a base, with PTSA and K_2CO_3 , respectively, providing the most quantitative results. As shown in Scheme 83, the methoxy group of methyl benzoate is replaced by an octoxy group, which yields octyl benzoate and methanol. This reaction is successfully completed in two minutes with microwave heating.

Scheme 82

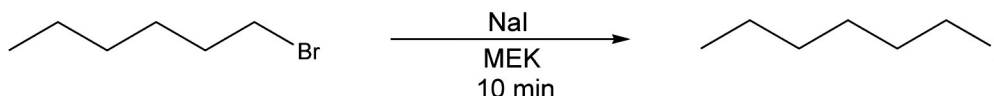


Scheme 83



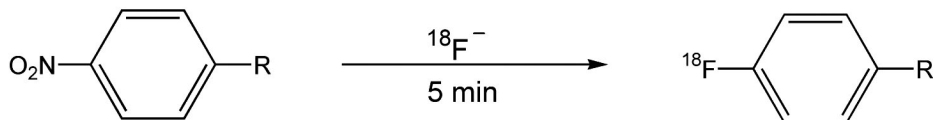
The Finkelstein halogen exchange reaction is another nucleophilic substitution reaction. Alkyl iodides can be prepared easily from alkyl chlorides or bromides. This reaction is successful because, unlike sodium iodide,

both sodium chloride and sodium bromide are not soluble in acetone or MEK. When an alkyl chloride or bromide is treated with sodium iodide, sodium chloride precipitates out of the solution, and formation of the alkyl iodide is favored. These reactions can take anywhere from 30 minutes to 80 hours for completion with conductive heating. Microwave heating yields alkyl iodides in ten minutes with excellent yields (Scheme 84).^{10,223}

Scheme 84

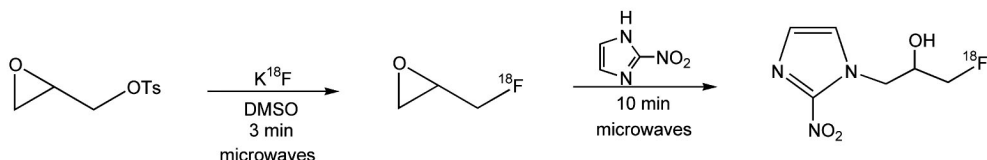
Another example of nucleophilic substitution reaction is radiolabeling. It is always a challenge to synthesize radiopharmaceuticals that are labeled with short-lived radionuclei. These reactions typically require long reaction times, and thus, have low radiochemical yields. The use of microwave irradiation provides shorter reaction times, and as a result, higher radiochemical yields.^{519,520} S_NAr reactions, with ^{18}F -fluoride anion (via cyclotron), were performed on nitrobenzenes (Scheme 85).⁵¹⁹ Comparing conventional methods to that of microwave heating, the radiochemical yields, in most cases, more than doubled with the use of microwaves. Scheme 86 shows the synthesis of epi- $[^{18}F]$ -fluoromisonidazole, which has been used in suspected cases of myocardial infarction.⁵²⁰ Synthetically, the yields increased from 40% (conventional) to 65% overall with microwave irradiation. In addition, the entire route, including work-up, took less than 70 minutes with a 40% radiochemical yield.

Scheme 85



Radiochemical yields			
R	MW 5 min	Conventional 5 min	Conventional 30 min
CN	68	52	82
COMe	25	10	22
CO(cyclopropyl)	77	24	80

Scheme 86

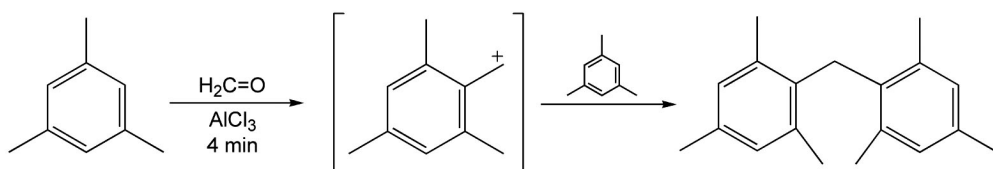
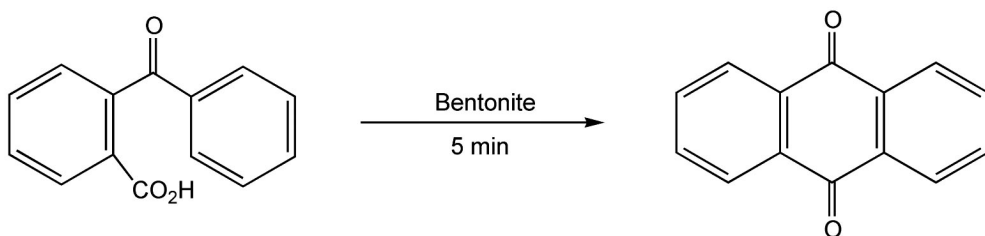


V. Electrophilic substitutions

Electrophilic substitutions also include a wide variety of different synthetic reactions. The majority of these reactions involve aromatic rings because most substitutions at an aliphatic carbon are nucleophilic. The converse is true with aromatic systems. They are more attracted to positively charged species because of their high electron density. Microwave irradiation has been used in examinations of Friedel-Crafts alkylations and acylations^{223,521-525}, sulfonylations^{75,381,526,527}, and deuterium-labeling⁵²⁸ of aromatic rings.

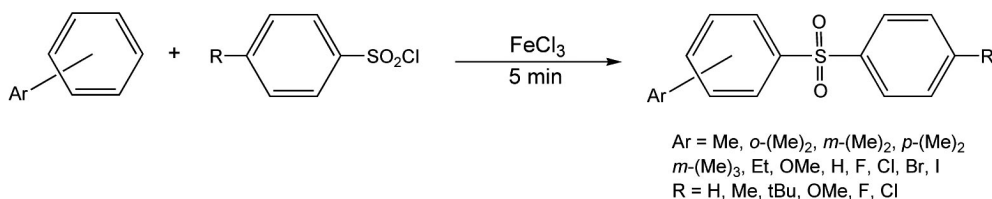
Friedel-Crafts alkylations and acylations are probably the most well known electrophilic aromatic substitutions. In these reactions, a proton directly attached to the aromatic ring is replaced with an alkyl or acetyl

group. Lewis acids are necessary to promote the formation of a cationic intermediate, which the aromatic ring attacks. Reaction times vary with aromatic ring activity when using conductive heating. Electron-donating groups (EDGs) provide faster reactions, whereas rings with electron-withdrawing groups (EWGs) react much slower. Reactions that are heated with microwaves proceed in five minutes or less, regardless of substituents. Scheme 87 shows an unusual reaction between mesitylene and formaldehyde.²²³ The carbocation that results is responsible for the Friedel-Crafts alkylation of another equivalent of mesitylene. This reaction proceeds in only four minutes with a 75% yield. Scheme 88 shows an intramolecular acylation on Bentonite ($\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3 \cdot 4\text{SiO}_2 \cdot \text{H}_2\text{O}$, montmorillonite) that yields anthraquinone in five minutes.⁵²²

Scheme 87**Scheme 88**

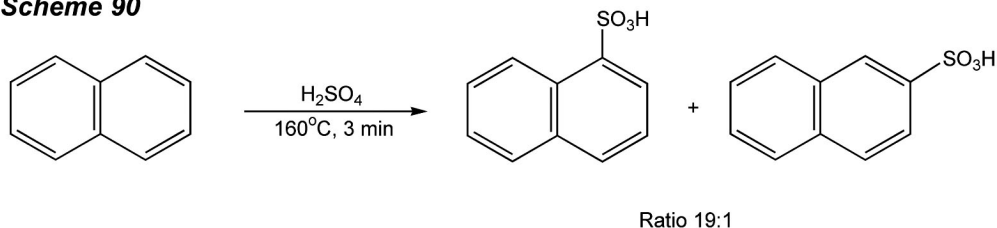
Aromatic sulfonylation reactions are analogous to Friedel-Craft acylations. Generally, an aryl sulfonic acid chloride, coupled with a Lewis acid catalyst, reacts with an aromatic system to form a diaryl sulfone. The reaction can also be extended to the synthesis of alkyl aryl sulfones, from alkyl sulfonyl fluorides, and sulfonic acids, from sulfuric acid. With thermal conditions, these reactions usually require a stoichiometric amount of expensive catalyst and/or prolonged heating times. Marquie et al. have thoroughly examined electrophilic acylation and sulfonylation reactions under microwave irradiation.⁵²³⁻⁵²⁶ They have synthesized diaryl sulfones, using a catalytic amount of inexpensive FeCl_3 , in only five minutes with moderate to high product yields (Scheme 89).

Scheme 89



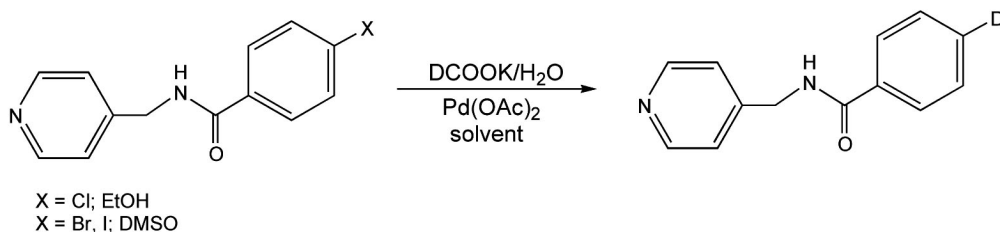
The sulfonylation of naphthalene is a very tricky transformation, regardless of reaction conditions. Both regioisomers, α - and β -substituted, are usually formed despite the fact that the β -substituted isomer is thermodynamically more stable. Interestingly, with temperature-controlled microwave heating for three minutes, α -naphthalenesulfonic acid is predominately formed in a 19:1 ratio (Scheme 90).³⁸¹

Scheme 90



Dehalogenation reactions are an effective and widely used method for deuterium-labeling (or tritium) of aromatic rings. Traditionally, labeling is achieved with either D_2 or T_2 gases. Both have solubility problems in organic solvents, and the storage of radioactive tritium waste is becoming an increasingly serious issue. Jones and co-workers have modified these labeling procedures by replacing D_2 and T_2 gases with labeled formates.⁵²⁸ Scheme 91 exhibits a dehalogenation reaction on halogen substituted benzamide compounds. Utilizing deuterium labeled potassium formate, palladium(II) acetate, and either DMSO or ethanol as a solvent, coupled with microwave irradiation for 20 seconds, these reactions yielded 94% labeled product.

Scheme 91

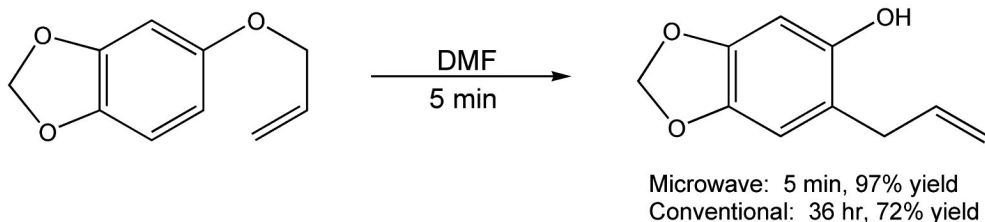


I. Rearrangements

[3,3]-Sigmatropic rearrangements are important pericyclic reactions (concerted bond-making and -breaking). Two very important [3,3]-sigmatropic rearrangements are the Claisen and the Cope. In one type of Claisen rearrangement, an aryl vinyl ether rearranges to either an *ortho*-Claisen product or a *para*-Claisen product. In a Cope rearrangement, the products result from the rearrangement of a 1,5-hexadiene. Traditional methods for these transformations usually require very harsh reaction conditions, and in some cases, products will not form if the bulk temperature is

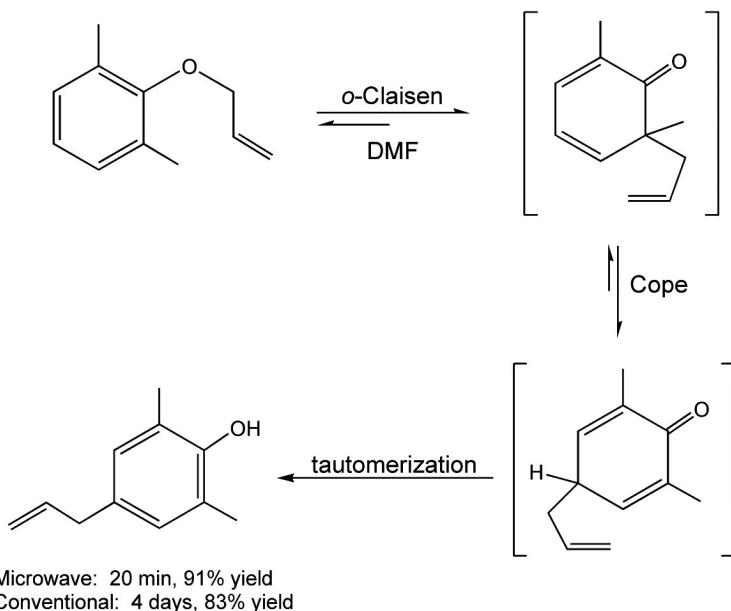
less than 200 °C. Utilization of microwaves decreases reaction times from days to minutes.^{10,223,529,530} Scheme 92 shows an *ortho*-Claisen rearrangement in which both the reaction time and product yield were enhanced.

Scheme 92



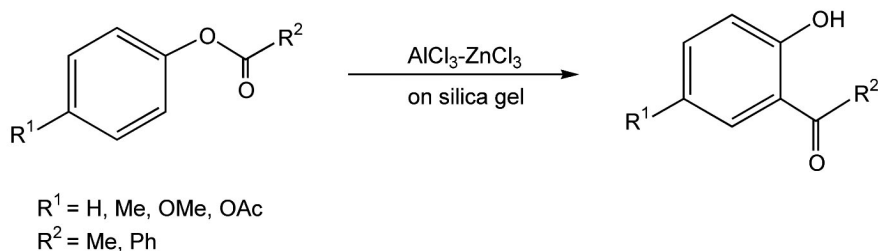
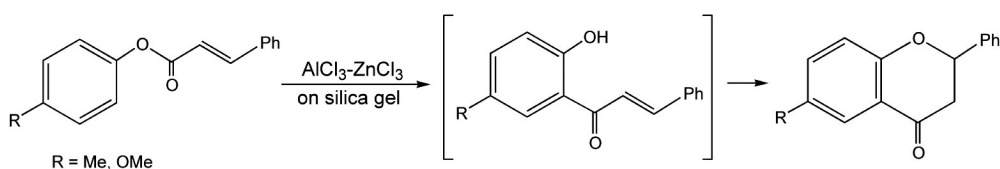
In a *para*-Claisen rearrangement, an *ortho*-Claisen rearrangement is followed by a Cope rearrangement and tautomerization. In the example shown in Scheme 93, both the *ortho*-Claisen and the Cope are reversible

Scheme 93



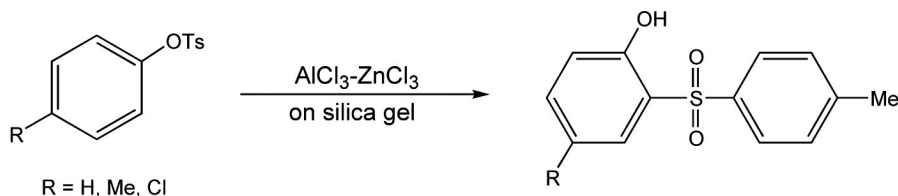
transformations, but once tautomerization occurs to form the aromatic ring, the yield of the *para* product increases. Conventional methods usually require days of heating, but with microwave irradiation, the product is obtained in 20 minutes.^{10,223}

The Fries rearrangement transforms an acyloxybenzene to an acylphenol. Acylphenols are important versatile organic intermediates that are used in agrochemical and pharmaceutical drug design. These reactions usually require stoichiometric amounts of Lewis acids and very long reflux times. In addition, they produce *ortho/para* mixtures. Moghaddam and co-workers have developed microwave-enhanced Fries rearrangements in dry media with 95% *ortho*-substituted products resulting (Scheme 94).⁵³¹ Incidentally, when cinnamyl esters of phenols were used, conjugate addition followed the rearrangement to yield flavanone derivatives (Scheme 95).⁵³¹

Scheme 94**Scheme 95**

Moghaddam et al. have also developed a thia-Fries rearrangement where aryl sulfonates rearrange to phenolic sulfones (Scheme 96).⁵³⁵

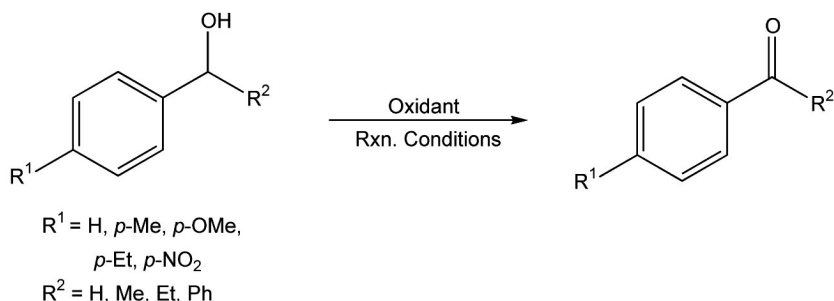
Scheme 96



VII. Oxidations

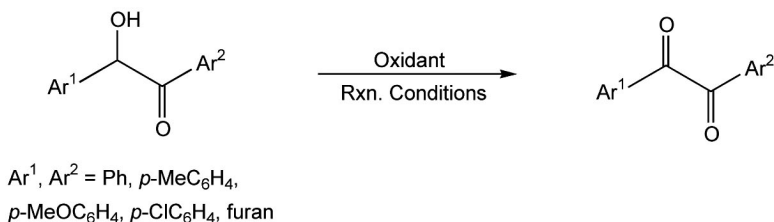
Oxidation reactions are obviously quite important to synthetic organic chemistry. Traditionally, they require stoichiometric amounts of harsh, toxic oxidants and long reaction times. Microwave-induced oxidations have been extensively explored, including alcohols to carbonyl-containing compounds^{137,160,536-567}, as well as non-oxygen compounds like aromatics⁵⁶⁸, sulfides⁵⁶⁹, and carbon-carbon double bonds⁵⁷⁰⁻⁵⁷².

A very common reaction of alcohols is their oxidation to carbonyl compounds. Primary alcohols can yield aldehydes or carboxylic acids and secondary alcohols produce ketones. Tertiary alcohols generally will not yield any oxidized products. Numerous methods are available for oxidizing different types of alcohols. Scheme 97 shows microwave-induced oxidation of benzyl alcohols with various oxidants and methods.^{10,223,543-551} In all of these reactions, microwave heating increased reaction rates drastically and also increased product yields.

Scheme 97

Oxidant	Conditions	Microwave	Ref #
PhI(OAc) ₂	alumina	1-3 min	547, 550
CrO ₃	alumina	30 s - 5 min	544, 548
PCC	CH ₂ Cl ₂	2 min	543
Clayfen	mont. clay	15 s - 1 min	551
MnO ₂	silica gel	20 s - 1 min	549
MnO ₂	Et ₂ O	7 min	9, 222

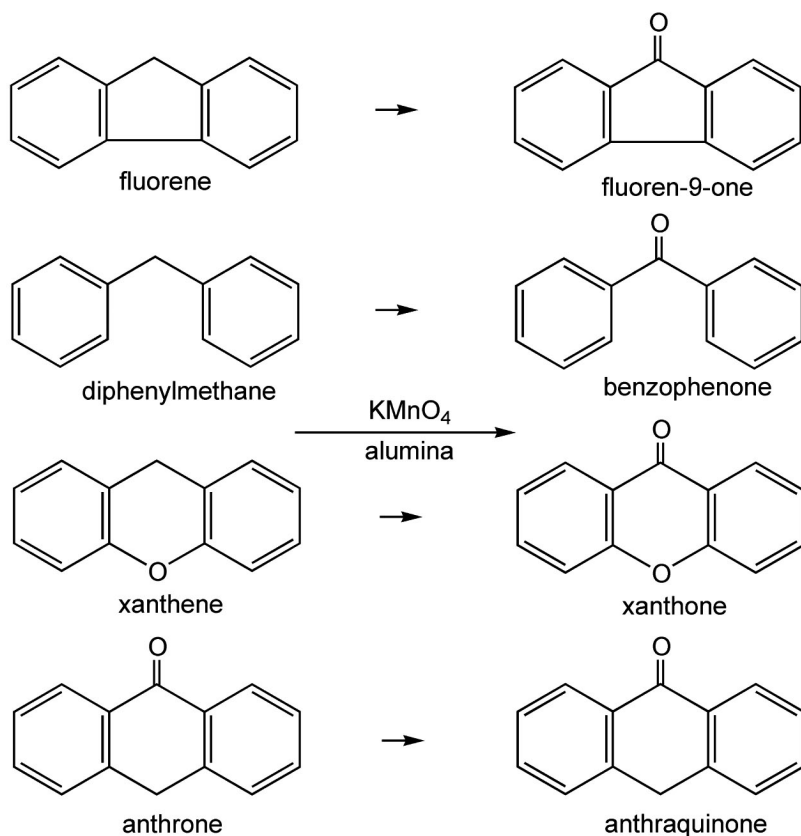
Benzoin oxidation to benzils, or 1,2-diketones, is another widely used reaction in synthetic chemistry. 1,2-Diketones are extremely important intermediates, as they can easily be transformed into many other organic functionalities. Conventional methods require extended reaction times with highly toxic oxidants. Using microwave irradiation eliminates both of these problems, as shown in Scheme 98.⁵⁶⁴⁻⁵⁶⁷

Scheme 98

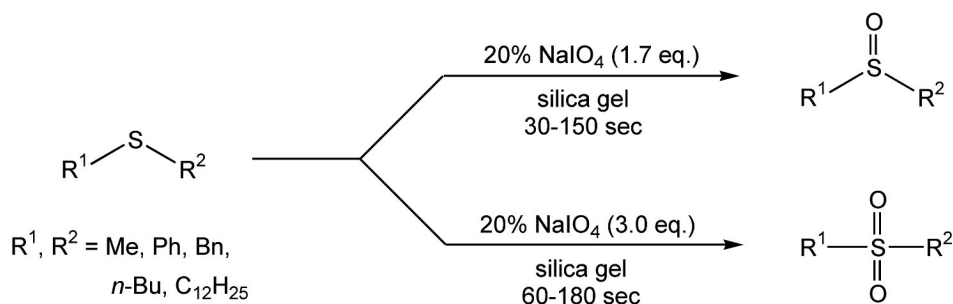
Oxidant	Conditions	Microwave/% Yield	Ref #
CuSO ₄	alumina	2-4 min/81-96%	565
Oxone	alumina	2-3 min/71-88%	566
Cu(OAc) ₂ /NH ₄ NO ₂	aq. AcOH	1-5 min/78-96%	567
PCC	CHCl ₃	1 min/80-94%	567
HNO ₃	neat	40 s - 1 min/79-95%	567

Aromatic tricyclic ring systems like fluorene, xanthene, diphenylmethane, and anthrone can also be oxidized. The methylene group in between the two aromatic rings can be directly oxidized to a carbonyl with potassium permanganate, but these reactions are frequently lengthy. With microwave irradiation, KMnO_4 on alumina, and solvent-free conditions, successful oxidation is completed in 10-30 minutes (Scheme 99).⁵⁶⁸

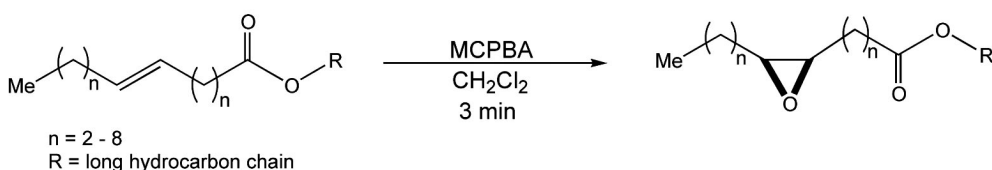
Scheme 99



Sulfides can be readily oxidized to both sulfoxides and sulfones. To be selective for one or the other is the main challenge that faces organic chemists. Various methods have been employed, but most require long reaction times, the addition of extra reagent, and thus, a higher concentration of corrosive acids, peracids, or metallic compounds. Varma and co-workers, who have done extensive work with oxidants on supported mediums in solvent-free reaction environments^{546-551,565,566,569}, have performed selective oxidation on sulfides with sodium periodate on silica gel via microwave-enhanced reaction conditions (Scheme 100).⁵⁶⁹

Scheme 100

Peracids are powerful oxidizing agents. Conventional use of *m*-chloroperbenzoic acid (MCPBA) on carbon-carbon double bonds forms epoxides, but these reactions are very long and usually take place at 0 °C. With microwave irradiation, epoxides are provided in only three minutes with 99% product yield (Scheme 101).⁵⁷⁰

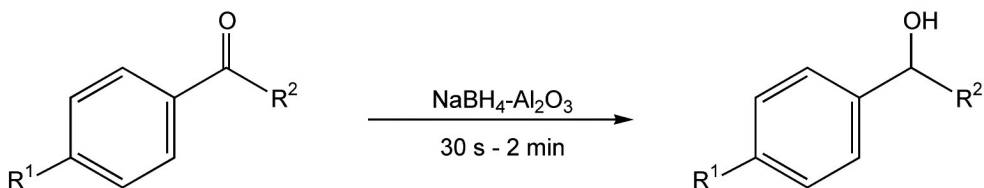
Scheme 101

VIII. Reductions

Reductions are very useful synthetic transformations and encompass a wide variety of applications. Microwave irradiation has been used to enhance yields and reaction rates of carbonyl to alcohol reductions⁵⁷³⁻⁵⁷⁹, reductive amination of carbonyl compounds⁵⁸⁰⁻⁵⁸², aromatic nitro group reduction to amines⁵⁸³, carbon-carbon double bond hydrogenations⁵⁸⁴⁻⁵⁸⁷, and hydrogenolysis of functional groups^{11,587-589}.

Many versatile reagents can reduce ketones to secondary alcohols and aldehydes to primary alcohols. Sodium borohydride is widely used, as it is inexpensive, compatible with solvents, and safer to use than other reducing agents. Its major drawback is that solvents reduce its reaction rate and a large excess of the reagent is needed to successfully reduce any compound. Varma and co-workers have impregnated alumina with NaBH_4 and have reduced ketones and aldehydes with microwaves in a solvent-free environment (Scheme 102).⁵⁷⁶ These reactions only required 1-5 equivalents of reducing agent and gave 80-93% product yields.

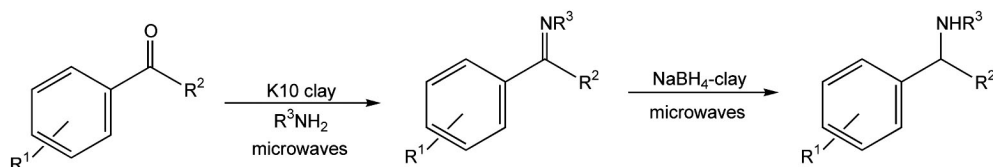
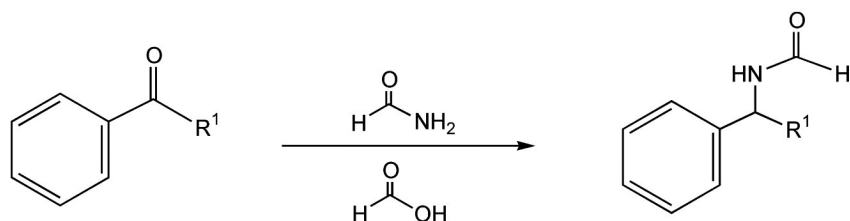
Scheme 102



$\text{R}^1 = \text{H, Me, OMe, Cl, NO}_2$

$\text{R}^2 = \text{H, Me, Ph}$

Reductive amination of carbonyl compounds is one of the most useful methods for synthesizing amines and their derivatives. The Borch reduction utilizes sodium borohydride derivatives for direct reduction to amines, while the Leuckart reaction produces N-formyl derivatives by using formamides. These reductions are plagued by high temperatures and long reaction times. Varma et al. used his NaBH_4 impregnated on support method, this time with clay, to effect reductive aminations on carbonyl compounds in five minutes or less.⁵⁸² Schiff bases (imines), generated in situ with microwaves on clay, followed by NaBH_4 -clay addition, produce secondary amines in high yields (Scheme 103). Loupy and co-workers have synthesized N-formyl derivatives with microwave-enhanced Leuckart reactions in 30 minutes (Scheme 104).⁵⁸¹

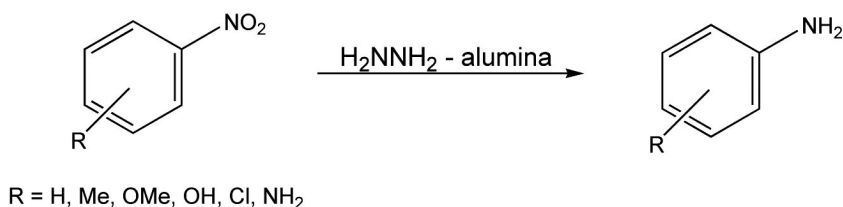
Scheme 103**Scheme 104**

$R^1 = \text{Ph, Bn}$

R^1	% yield after 30 min	
	MW	Conv.
Ph	99	2
Bn	99	12

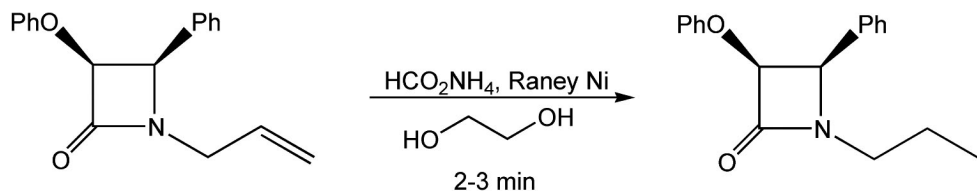
Aromatic nitro groups can be reduced to amines by numerous methods in the solution phase. Conventional reaction conditions usually consist of the nitro compound, hydrazine hydrate, and a metal catalyst in refluxing ethanol or dioxane. Long reflux periods are required for successful reduction. As a solution, microwave-induced reduction with alumina-supported hydrazine and iron(III) chloride provided 100% conversion to aromatic amines (Scheme 105).⁵⁸³

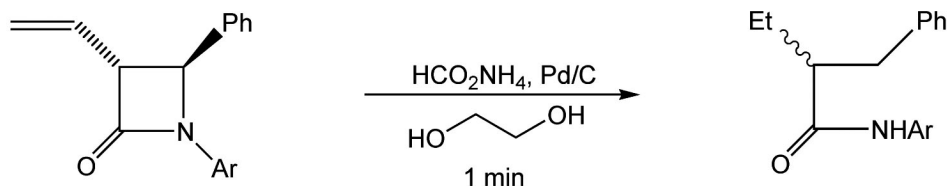
Scheme 105



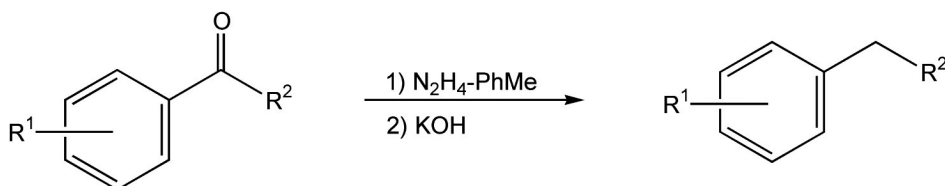
In order to continue their research in microwave enhanced β -lactam synthesis, Bose and co-workers have developed hydrogenation and hydrogenolysis methods that utilize ammonium formate and either a Raney nickel or Pd/C catalyst (catalytic transfer hydrogenation).⁵⁸⁷ As seen in Scheme 106, Raney nickel will only hydrogenate the carbon-carbon double bond, while use of a Pd/C catalyst will both hydrogenate and cleave the carbon-nitrogen bond (Scheme 107).

Scheme 106



Scheme 107Ar = Ph, Bn, *p*-OMe

Complete reduction of a carbonyl group can be accomplished by the Wolff-Kishner reaction. Traditionally, these reactions require high temperatures and long reaction times. With microwave irradiation, reduction is completed in minutes with near quantitative product yields (Scheme 108).^{588,589}

Scheme 108

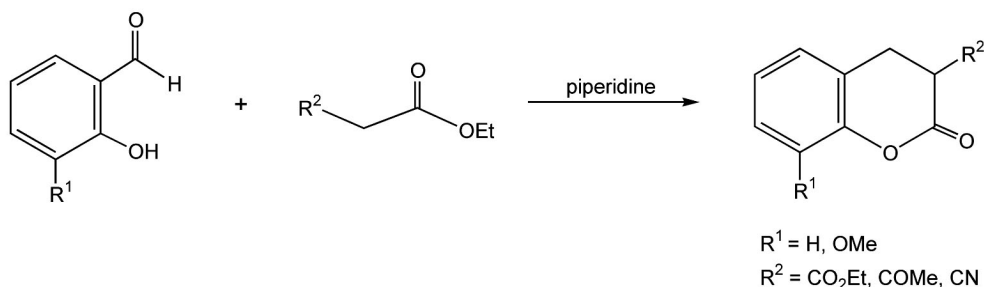
IX. Condensations

Condensation reactions are some of the most useful carbon-carbon bond forming methods available. However, many of these reactions require high temperatures and long reaction times. Microwave irradiation has been found to be quite effective in aldol⁵⁹⁰⁻⁶⁰¹, Knoevenagel^{136,173,602-624}, Pechmann⁶²⁵, Henry^{626,627}, Mannich⁶²⁸⁻⁶³⁰, and Ugi⁶³¹ condensations.

Knoevenagel reactions are generally base-catalyzed mixed aldol condensations. This reaction has been used successfully to synthesize coumarin derivatives.

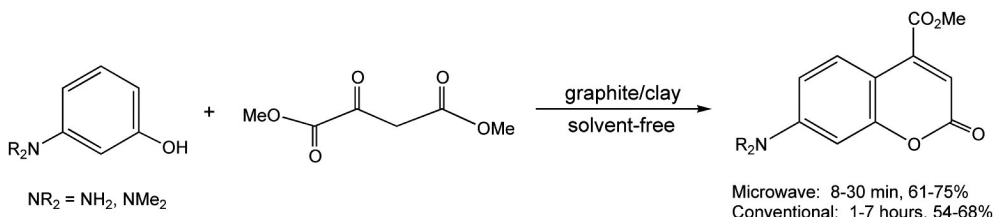
These natural products are used extensively in fragrances, pharmaceuticals, and agrochemicals. Scheme 109 shows successful coumarin syntheses from microwave-enhanced reactions of hydroxy-aldehydes, esters, and a basic catalyst, piperidine.⁶⁰⁵

Scheme 109

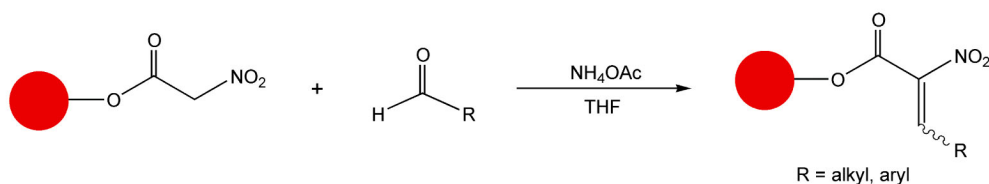


Coumarins have also been synthesized by the Pechmann reaction, which involves a condensation of phenols with β -ketonic esters. Conventional Pechmann methods require harsh sulfuric acid conditions for a couple of days, and depending on reactivity of the substrates, high temperatures. Rare aminocoumarins can be synthesized on a graphite/montmorillonite K10 clay support in 5 to 30 minutes with microwave irradiation (Scheme 110).⁶²⁵

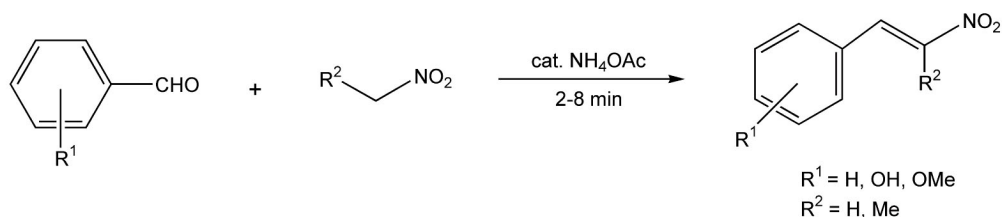
Scheme 110



Knoevenagel condensations can also be used in nitroalkene synthesis. Nitroalkenes are important synthetic building blocks to many potential pharmaceuticals. Scheme 111 exhibits a solid-phase approach to substituted nitroalkenes via microwave irradiation.⁶⁰⁹

Scheme 111

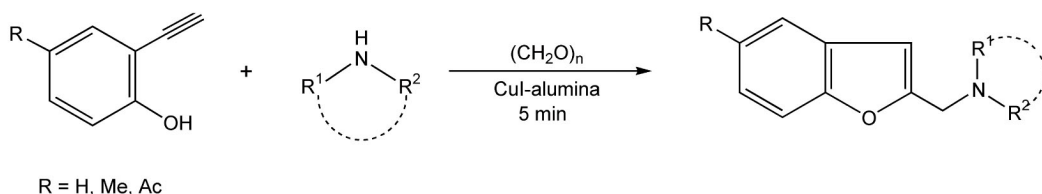
Nitroalkenes can also be synthesized via the Henry condensation, which reacts a carbonyl compound with a nitroalkane under basic conditions. The resulting β -nitro alcohol dehydrates to give the nitroalkene. Classical conditions for the Henry reaction require elevated temperatures, which may not initiate the dehydration. Varma and co-workers have executed very high yielding solvent-free Henry reactions with a catalytic amount of ammonium acetate (Scheme 112).⁶²⁶

Scheme 112

The Mannich condensation is generally a reaction between a carbonyl compound and an iminium ion, which is generated in situ from a secondary amine and formaldehyde. It is mainly used to introduce an α -dialkylaminomethyl substituent, and depending on the synthetic

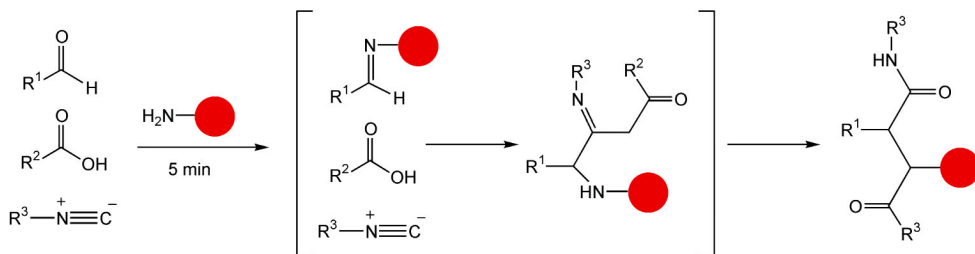
goal, it can then be thermally decomposed to α -methylene compounds. Traditional Mannich condensations often require severe reaction conditions. With microwave irradiation, Mannich reactions between *o*-ethynylphenols, secondary amines, and paraformaldehyde on CuI-doped alumina yield benzo[*b*]furans (Scheme 113).⁶²⁹

Scheme 113



The Ugi reaction is another one-pot multi-component condensation reaction. There are four components used in this reaction, an amine, an aldehyde/ketone, a carboxylic acid, and an isocyanide. These combine to yield α -acylamino amides. Some Ugi reactions proceed rapidly, but most require 24 hours to several days for successful completion. Solid-phase Ugi condensations were effected in only five minutes in a 2:1 dichloromethane:methanol solvent mixture with microwaves (Scheme 114).⁶³¹

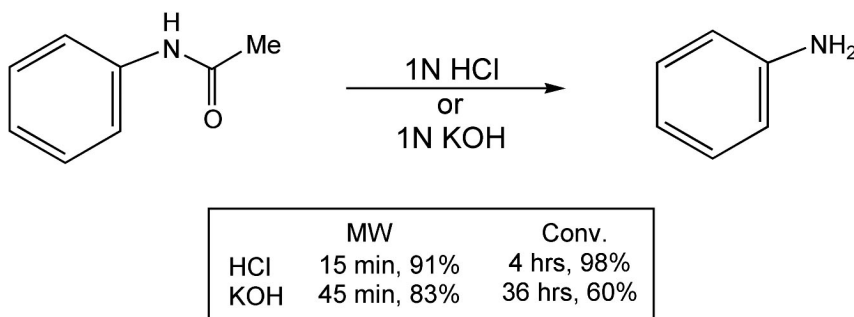
Scheme 114



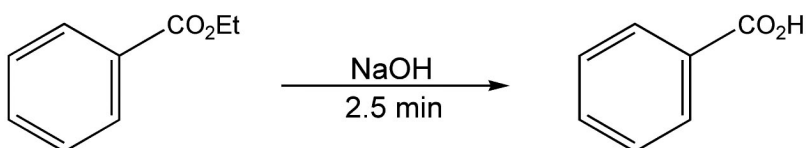
X. Hydrolysis

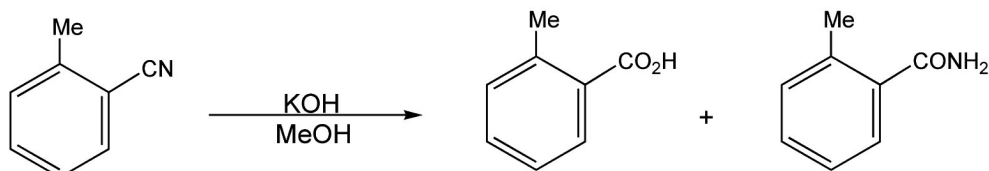
Hydrolyses of organic compounds require the use of strong aqueous acids or bases and extensive periods of high conductive heating. Microwave irradiation is quite useful with this synthetic application in that it will hydrolyze esters, amides, nitriles, and peptides into carboxylic acids and their respective amines or alcohols in a very short period of time.^{10,223,632-638} Scheme 115 shows both the acid- and base-catalyzed hydrolysis of acetanilide to aniline.^{10,223} Ester hydrolysis (saponification) to a carboxylic acid is shown in Scheme 116.⁶³⁸ Under basic conditions, 2-cyanotoluene can be hydrolyzed to both its carboxylic acid and amide derivative in a 5:95 ratio (Scheme 117).^{10,223} Lastly, peptide hydrolysis, which normally can take twelve or more hours, is successfully completed in 15-30 minutes with microwave heating (Scheme 118).^{10,223}

Scheme 115

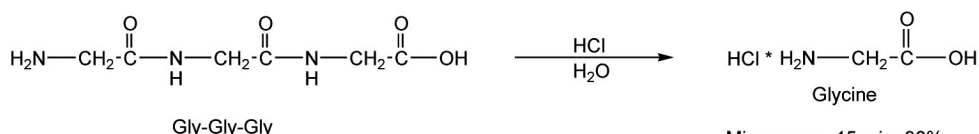


Scheme 116



Scheme 117

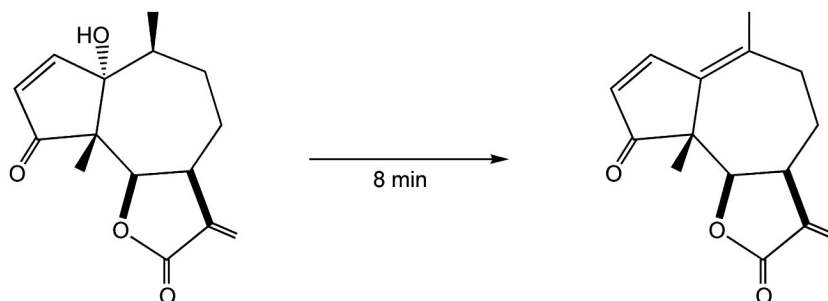
Microwave: 5:95 ratio, 15 min
 Conventional: 14:86 ratio, 34 hours

Scheme 118

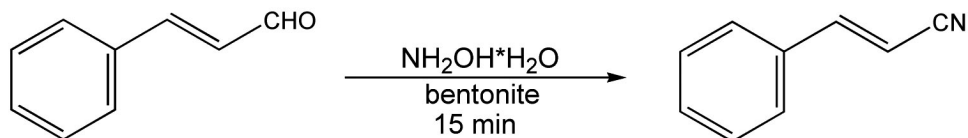
Microwave: 15 min, 98%
 Conventional: 12 hours, 94%

XI. Dehydration

Dehydration reactions also work exceptionally well with microwave irradiation. Simple dehydrations of alcohols to carbon-carbon double bonds⁶³⁹⁻⁶⁴², cyclodehydration reactions^{643,644}, and aldehydes to nitriles^{93,645-651} can all be successfully executed in 1-15 minutes. Scheme 119 exhibits the dehydration of parthenin to anhydroparthenin.⁶³⁹ Flavones can be synthesized from *o*-hydroxydibenzoyl-methanes on clay by cyclodehydration (Scheme 120).⁶⁴⁴

Scheme 119

Aldehydes on bentonite clay can be converted to nitriles by using hydroxylamine hydrochloride and microwave irradiation (Scheme 121).⁶⁵¹

Scheme 120**Scheme 121**

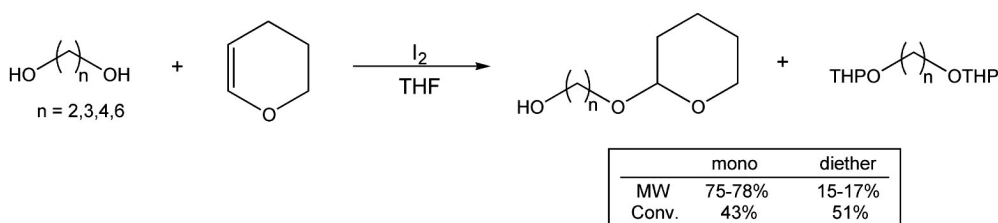
XII. Protection and Deprotection

Two of the most important steps in synthetic organic chemistry routes are protection and deprotection of important functional groups. Protecting groups are needed to temporarily block a certain reactive site on a molecule. The protective group is then chemically removed (deprotected) in a later step and that particular reactive functional group is regenerated. There are many different methods of both protection and deprotection. Traditionally, protection has selectivity problems, while harsh conditions are needed for deprotection. Microwave irradiation has been shown to be quite effective in both of these areas, as well as decreasing reaction times immensely. Trifluoroacetylation of amines and esterification of alcohols were both briefly discussed in Section IV of this chapter. In addition, research has been performed on the protection of amino acids⁶⁵³, etherification of alcohols⁶⁵⁴⁻⁶⁵⁶ and diols⁶⁵⁷,

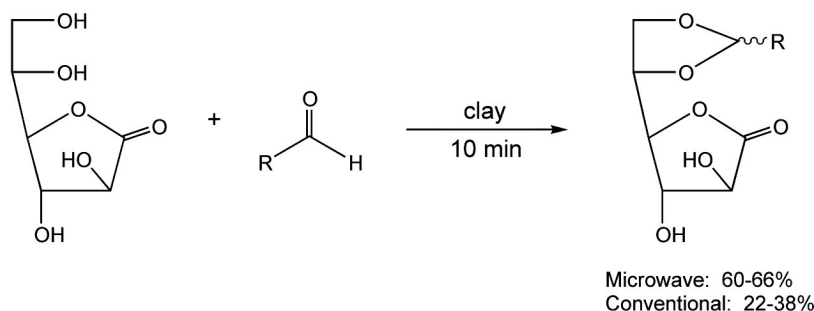
and both oxathiolane/dithiolane^{62,150,658,659} and ketal/ acetal^{62,150,660-667} protection of carbonyl compounds.

Hydroxyl groups are present in a large number of compounds that are of pharmaceutical interest, including nucleosides, carbohydrates, steroids, and macrolides. They are susceptible to oxidation, acetylation, and halogenation, and therefore, must be protected occasionally in synthetic routes. Etherification is one of the most widely used alcohol protection methods available. Traditionally, the selective protection of one of two identical hydroxyls in a symmetrical molecule is quite limited. Successful monotetrahydropyranylation has been effected on symmetrical diols in less than three minutes with microwave irradiation (Scheme 122).⁶⁵⁴ Acetals and ketals are used to protect 1,2- and 1,3-diols. Scheme 123 shows acetalization effected on clay in a solvent-free environment with ten minutes of microwave heating.⁶⁵⁷

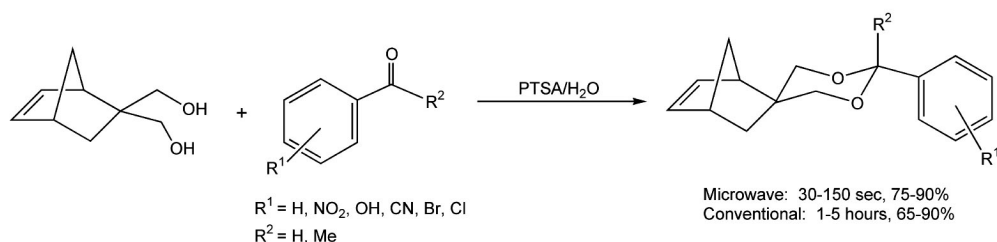
Scheme 122



Scheme 123



Carbonyls are very susceptible to nucleophilic attack. Acyclic and cyclic acetals or ketals are the most widely used protection method for carbonyl-containing compounds. Classically, this reaction is usually acid catalyzed and requires high temperatures for the azeotropic removal of water with a Dean-Stark trap. Successful acetalization resulted on aldehydes and ketones by using a catalytic amount of *p*-toluenesulfonic acid coupled with microwave irradiation (Scheme 124).⁶⁶⁰

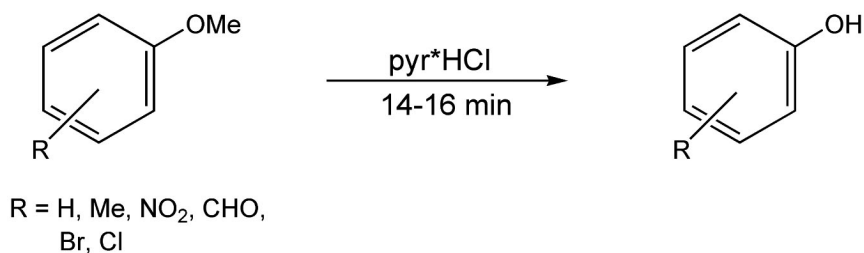
Scheme 124

Extensive work has been done on deprotection methods that have required harsh conventional reaction conditions. Successful research on deprotection methods to alcohols or diols include demethylation⁶⁶⁸, deacetylation^{669,670}, and oxidative deprotection of ethers^{83,671-682}. Cleavage of oxathiolanes⁶⁸³, thioacetals^{684,685}, acetals^{82,123,686-689}, hydrazones⁶⁹⁰⁻⁶⁹², semicarbazones⁶⁹²⁻⁶⁹⁴, and oximes^{69,76,79,80,146,170,695-700} with microwave irradiation provides carbonyl-containing compounds readily. Lastly, deprotection of esters yields carboxylic acids.⁷⁰¹⁻⁷⁰⁶

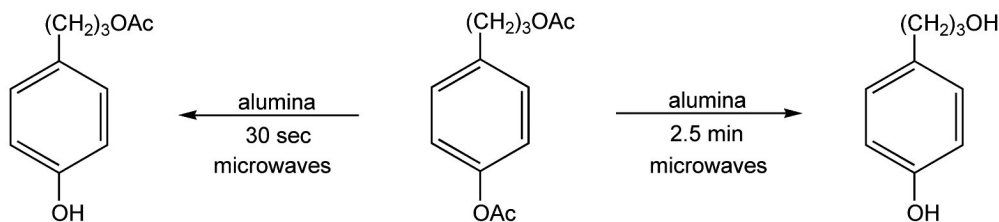
To reiterate, ethers are the most widely used protective group in synthetic chemistry. Their high stability against a variety of reaction conditions makes them very effective. Deprotection of methylated phenolic derivatives is hard to accomplish mildly, and therefore, requires acidic reagents and high temperatures. Use of pyridine hydrochloride and microwave irradiation successfully regenerates phenols in 15 minutes (Scheme 125).⁶⁶⁸

Varma et al. show how both deacetylation⁶⁶⁹ (Scheme 126) and cleavage of *t*-butyldimethylsilyl ethers⁶⁷⁹ (Scheme 127) can easily be achieved directly on alumina in solvent-free reaction conditions. Traditionally, deprotection of THP ethers to their respective alcohols is achieved with toxic chromium(VI) reagents. Heravi and co-workers have used iron(III) nitrate on clay for direct oxidation of THP ethers to their carbonyl compounds (Scheme 128).⁶⁷⁶

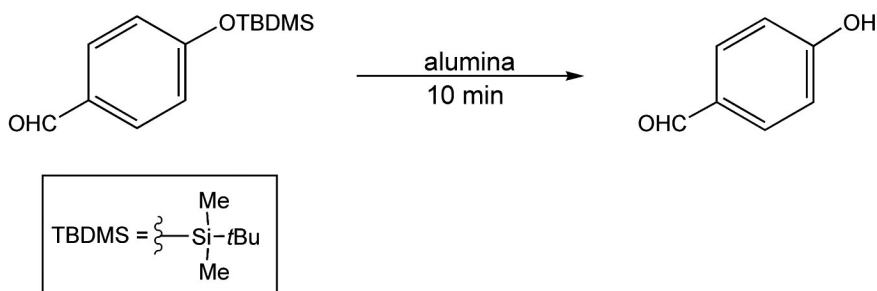
Scheme 125

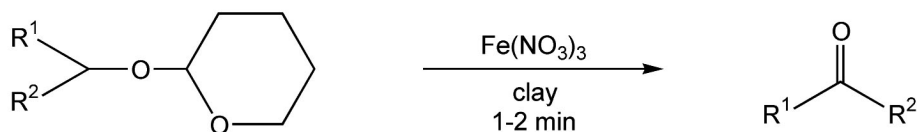


Scheme 126

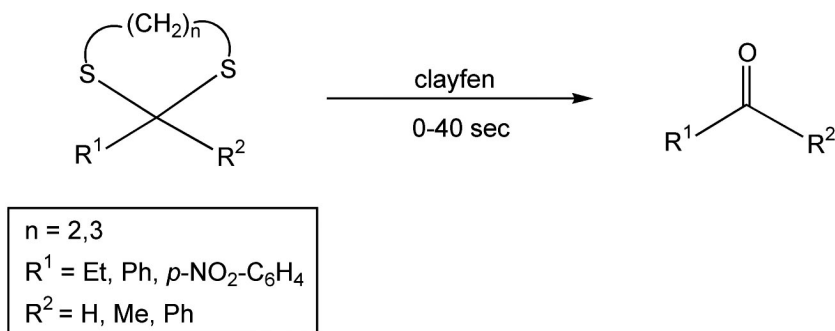


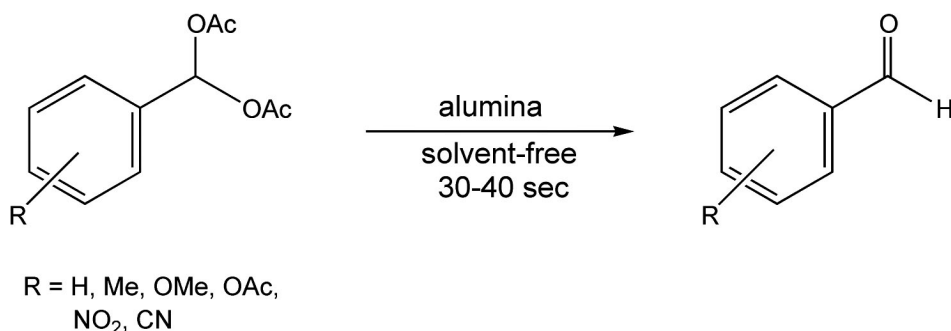
Scheme 127



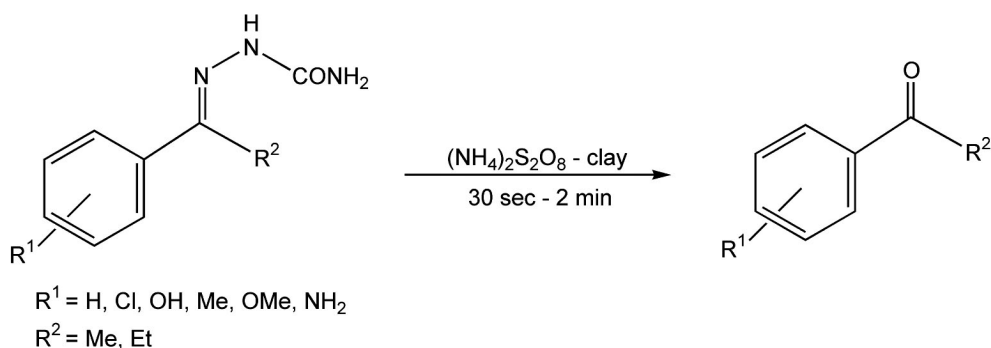
Scheme 128

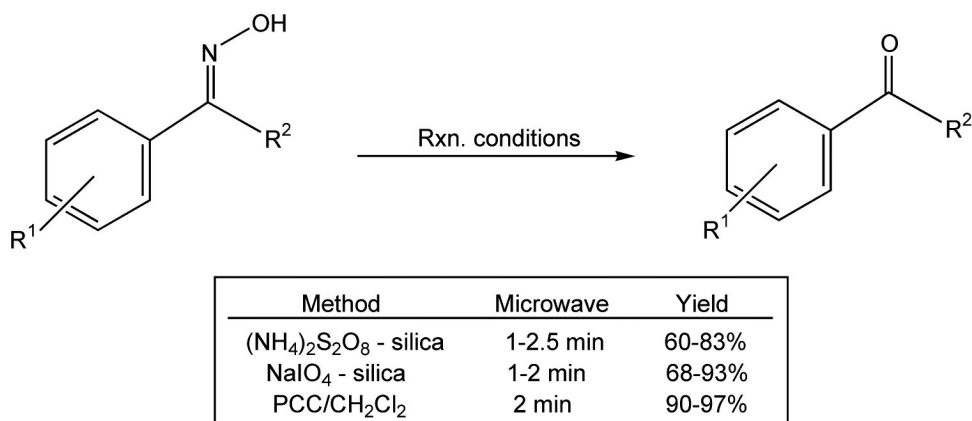
Dithioacetals and acetals, both cyclic and acyclic, are superb carbonyl protecting groups and are used extensively in synthetic routes. The sulfur-containing acetals are very effective, as they are highly stable against strong acids and bases. Conventional deprotection methods usually require toxic heavy metals. Successful dethioacetalization of thioacetals/ketals, utilizing iron(III) nitrate on clay (clayfen) and very little microwave irradiation, occurred with 87-98% product yields (Scheme 129).⁶⁸⁴ Diacetyl acetals are very efficient as protectors of the aldehyde moiety. Geminal diacetates are quite stable in acidic conditions and are cleaved by strong bases. Traditionally, deprotection is executed by either overnight stirring with sodium hydroxide or refluxing in alcoholic sulfuric acid. Scheme 130 exhibits deacetalization of benzaldehyde diacetate derivatives on neutral alumina in 30-40 seconds, 88-98% yields.⁶⁸⁹

Scheme 129

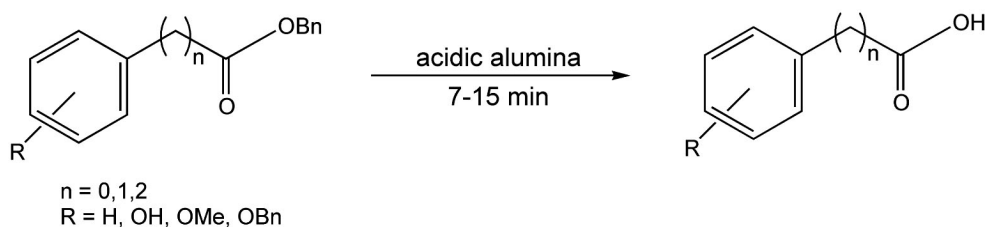
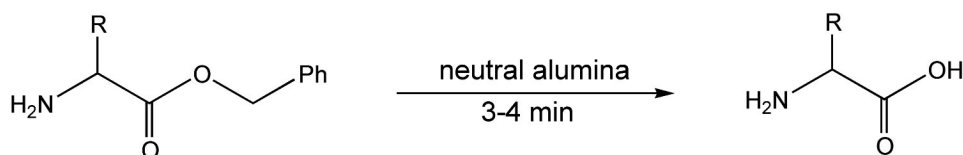
Scheme 130

Semicarbazones, hydrazones, and oximes are essentially functional group equivalents of carbonyl compounds, and thus, are useful protecting groups. Conventional deprotection of these derivatives usually requires long reaction times with very high temperatures. Semicarbazones and hydrazones can be deprotected to regenerate the carbonyl with ammonium persulfate on clay coupled with microwave irradiation (Scheme 131).⁶⁹² Microwave-enhanced regeneration of the carbonyl by deoximation can be achieved by use of either ammonium persulfate⁶⁹⁸ or sodium periodate⁶⁹⁹ on silica, or even pyridinium chlorochromate⁷⁰⁰ (Scheme 132).

Scheme 131

Scheme 132

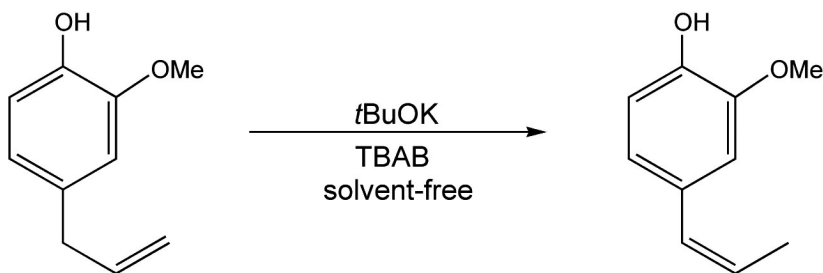
Carboxylic acids mainly need to be protected in order to mask the acidic proton in base-catalyzed reactions. Esters are a useful protecting group for the carboxyl moiety, as they remove the acidic proton and provide for easier handling of the molecule. Deesterification traditionally provides moderate yields and poor chemoselectivity. Varma and co-workers have successfully deprotected benzyl esters in solvent-free conditions on alumina (Schemes 133 and 134).⁷⁰²

Scheme 133**Scheme 134**

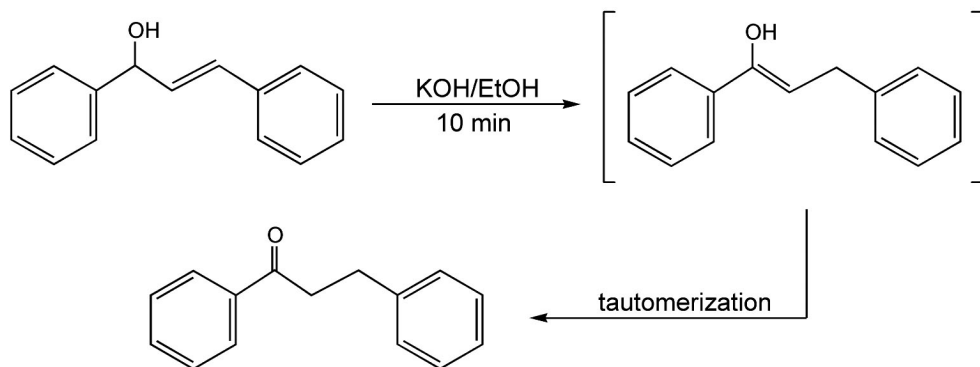
XIII. Miscellaneous reactions

Isomerizations of double bonds and tautomerizations (interconversion of isomers) are useful organic transformations. These also can be enhanced by microwave irradiation. Loupy et al. have used microwave-induced, solvent-free, solid-liquid-phase transfer catalysis (PTC), which employs a salt (in this case, potassium *t*-butoxide) and a phase transfer catalyst (tetrabutylammoniumbromide, TBAB), to isomerize eugenol to isoeugenol (Scheme 135).⁷⁰⁸ An example of a microwave-enhanced double bond isomerization followed by enol – keto tautomerization is shown in Scheme 136.^{10,223}

Scheme 135

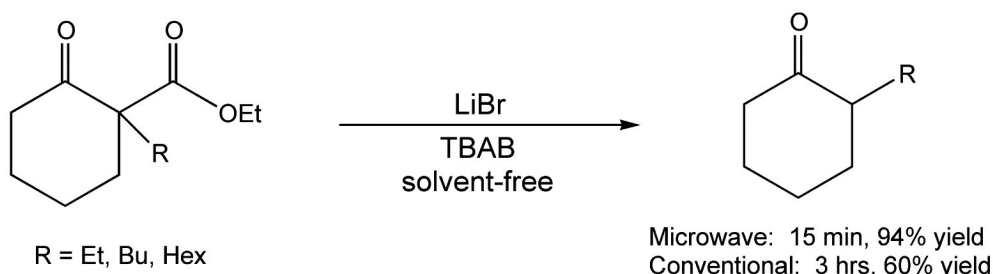


Scheme 136

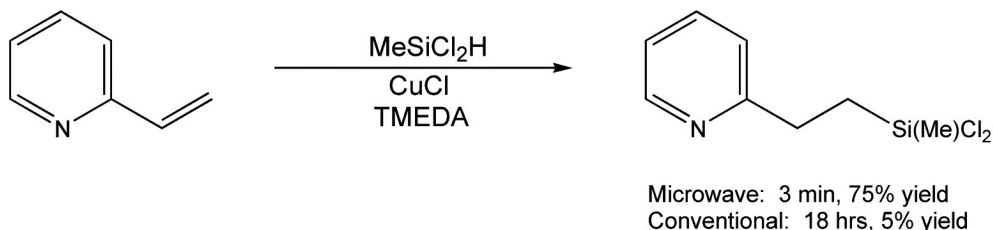


Microwave: 10 min, 97% yield
Conventional: 20 hrs, 86% yield

Dealkoxycarbonylation, also known as the Krapcho reaction, completely removes an ester group directly from the carbon alpha to a carbonyl. These reactions are difficult to achieve with conductive heating, and they usually require very high temperatures with DMSO as the solvent. Loupy uses PTC with LiBr/TBAB to transform malonic esters to monoesters (Scheme 137).⁷⁰⁹

Scheme 137

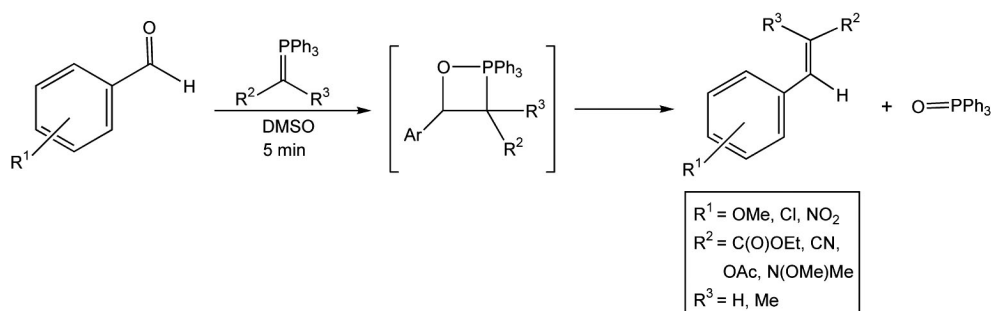
Hydrosilylation of alkenes is another reaction that proceeds poorly with conventional heating. The example shown below in Scheme 138 normally requires 18 hours of thermal heat and provides only a 5% product yield. With six 30-second bursts of microwave irradiation, the 2-vinylpyridine is silylated with a 75% yield of product.³⁸¹

Scheme 138

The Wittig reaction is probably the most reliable olefin-forming reaction in synthetic organic chemistry. In this reaction, an aldehyde or a ketone reacts with a

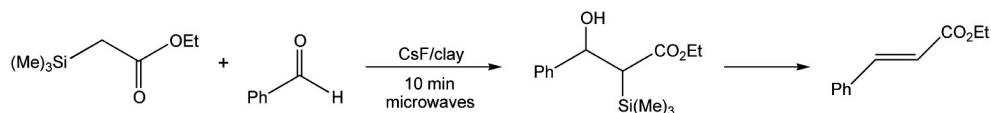
phosphorus ylide, forming an oxaphosphetane intermediate. The four-membered ring collapses and produces the alkene and a phosphine oxide byproduct. Wittig reactions, traditionally, can require up to 24 hours of reflux in high boiling point solvents. There has been some research performed on the microwave-assisted synthesis of both the Wittig reagent (ylide)⁷¹⁰ and the reaction itself⁷¹¹⁻⁷¹⁹. Scheme 139 exhibits successful Wittig transformations on benzaldehyde derivatives that occurred in five minutes.⁷¹¹

Scheme 139



The Peterson olefination, also known as the silyl-Wittig reaction, utilizes a trialkylsilylmethyl lithium (or magnesium) reagent that adds to a ketone or aldehyde. The β -hydroxysilane intermediate, which can be isolated, eliminates water upon acid or base catalysis. Depending on the stability of the β -hydroxysilane, these reactions can require many hours of reflux. A Peterson reaction in which the silylmethyl anion was generated in situ with cesium fluoride on clay was successful in ten minutes with microwave heating (Scheme 140).⁷²¹

Scheme 140



The role of microwave synthesis in drug discovery and development will only increase over the next several years. There is a need for a very simple, flexible, and compact microwave system that can be used in synthesis laboratories. As with most new technology, various levels of automation will be demanded and introduced to the market to support needs in drug discovery and library generation. This technology will eventually replace hot plates, heating mantles, and block heaters, allowing chemists to begin using microwave energy on a broad scale, as affordable instrumentation becomes readily available. Academia, drug discovery, and lead optimization are the areas expected to receive the most benefit from this new technology. As microwave synthesis instrumentation continues to evolve, new applications will be developed for a variety of chemistries and process developing needs. This will naturally accelerate as the technology is adopted. Undoubtedly, microwave-enhanced synthesis will be a valuable tool for chemists in a variety of fields and specialties for many years to come.

Chapter 5

Getting Started With Microwave Synthesis

Are you ready to get started with microwave synthesis? If so, you're in the right place! This is probably the most important chapter in this book, for it provides the user with a quick review of previous chapters and an explanation of how to actually get started with microwave organic chemistry and perform

There is a completely new side of organic synthesis that is waiting to be discovered.

reactions. As you gain more experience developing and performing reactions, you will be able to design, refine, and optimize your own methods. For a pictorial view, I have developed a flow chart that can be used to help follow this discussion (Chart 1). It has been divided into two parts (Charts 2 and 3). Chart 1 offers an overview of method development for closed and open vessel reactions. Chart 2 takes you through the development of a pressurized microwave reaction, while Chart 3 discusses one performed at atmospheric pressure. I will be referring to these charts throughout the chapter.

This chapter has been organized into two major sections. The first section pertains to method development. It is divided into three main parts, each discussing an important aspect of a typical, microwave-enhanced chemical reaction including atmospheric versus closed conditions; choosing a solvent; and deciding time, temperature, and power parameters. The last section discusses the optimization of your microwave reaction method. What happens if your first method did not work and no product has formed? I will provide details on which parameters you should change and how you should change them. Read on and let's get started!

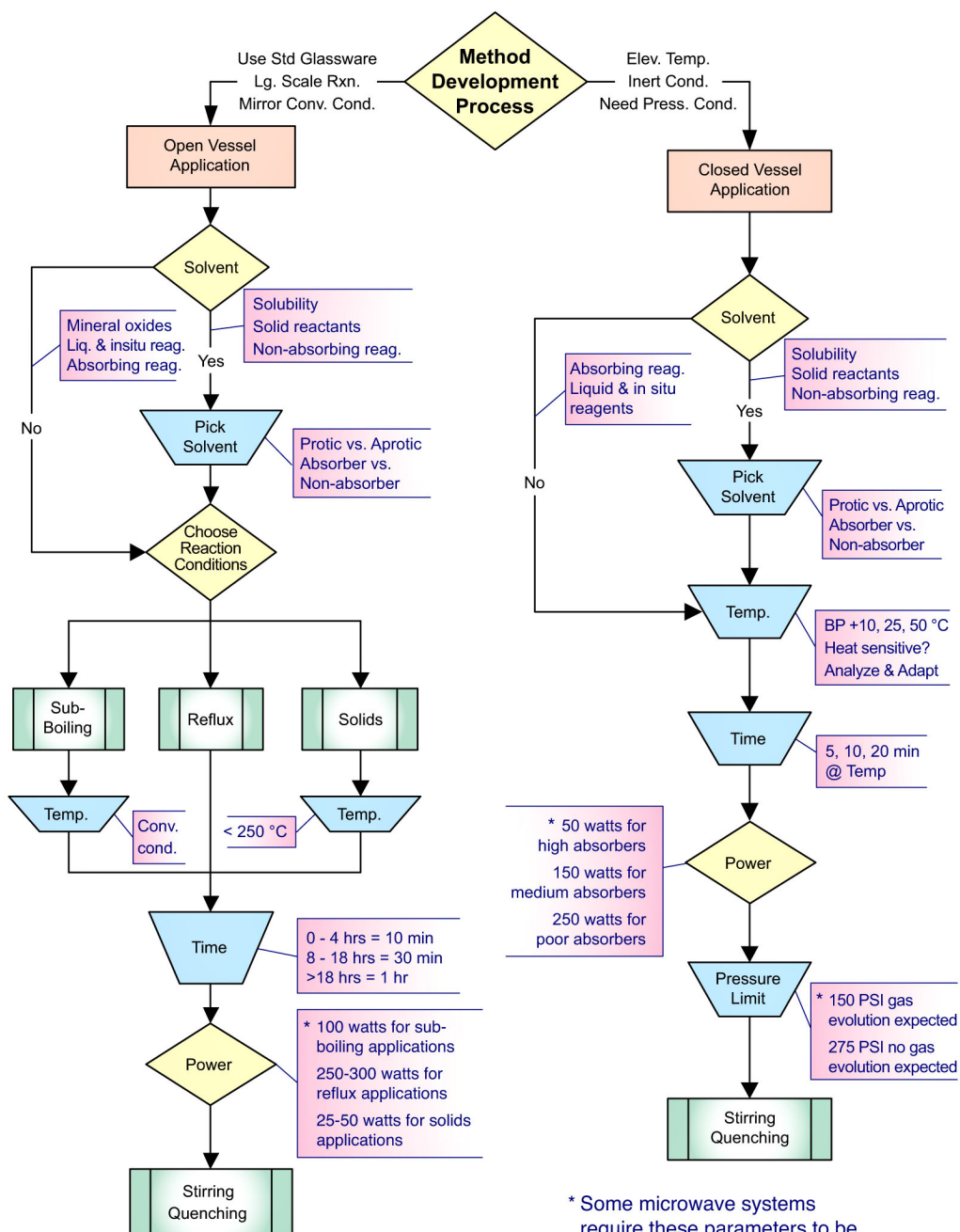
Method Development

I. Pressure vs. Atmospheric

Once you have decided what type of chemical reaction you wish to perform, your first question is going to be whether you should run it in a closed environment or at atmospheric pressure. There are advantages to both. The scale of the reaction will probably be the deciding factor. Pressurized reactions are, of course, smaller in scale, as the certified pressure tubes can only hold about 7 mL. The maximum size is 10 mL, but there needs to be enough headspace to contain the vapors that result. As previously mentioned, a pressurized environment can be very advantageous to many different kinds of chemistries. Solvents can be heated up to temperatures that are two to four times their respective boiling points. Dichloromethane (bp 40 °C) can even be heated to 180 °C, which is 4.5 times its boiling point. This characteristic of microwave synthesis provides the large rate enhancements (up to 1000x) that are observed.

Pressurized reactions provide inert atmospheres for use of air- and moisture-sensitive reagents.

Chart 1



Pressurized reactions also provide inert atmospheres for use of air- and moisture-sensitive reagents.

Atmospheric reactions can be performed on a much larger scale than pressurized ones. One major advantage is that they can be done in standard round bottom flasks. This allows for use of reflux condensers, addition funnels, Dean-Stark traps, or any other glass apparatus that is needed. Another major advantage of open vessel microwave organic reactions is that you can mirror the conventional conditions. Under atmospheric conditions, you may not observe the enhancements seen with pressurized vessels, but you will see reaction rates that are 10x faster than conventional methods. Depending on the type of reaction you are doing and the temperatures that are needed, atmospheric conditions may be the method of choice.

II. Choosing a solvent

As we move on in Chart 1, the next box we come to asks us whether we are going to use a solvent. Chapter 3 thoroughly discusses both reactions run in the presence of solvent and those run in a solventless environment. It is, once again, your preference, and there are benefits to each. Both open and closed vessel reactions can be performed either way. Most chemists are more familiar with solution phase reactions, but those performed in a solventless environment are becoming more prevalent in organic chemistry. An increasing need for less hazardous reaction conditions and environmentally safe procedures, or green chemistry, has led chemical synthesis in this direction.

There are other reasons to perform solvent-free microwave reactions. If all your reagents are in the liquid form (including in situ reagents) or your solid reagents melt at a certain temperature, then no additional liquid/solvent may be needed. In addition, your reaction mixture could be very “absorbing” without sol-

vent. Polar or ionic reagents will couple very efficiently with the microwave energy. Most of the solvent-free research in which reagents are adsorbed onto mineral oxides has been performed in an open vessel. These reactions usually require larger vessels and mechanical stirring. Depending on what type of reaction you are attempting, a solvent-free method may be optimal.

For solution phase reactions, choice of solvent can be a crucial factor in the outcome. The polarity of a solvent plays a significant role in microwave-assisted reactions. If your reactants are “non-absorbing”, then a polar solvent is necessary. The more polar a reaction mixture is, the greater its ability to couple with the microwave energy, leading to a more rapid rise in internal temperature. Table 28 (taken from Chapter 2) lists some common organic solvents that have been categorized as high, medium, or low absorbers of microwave energy. Though nonpolar solvents (i.e. hexane, benzene, toluene) do not couple very efficiently to microwave energy, and hence, do not heat reactions very well, they can act as a heat sink. Reaction mixtures that are temperature sensitive will benefit greatly from this ability, as the nonpolar solvent will help to draw away the thermal heat that is being produced from the interaction between microwave irradiation and the polar reagents. The reaction is still receiving activation energy, but its internal temperature will remain low.

Additionally, a pressurized environment can be very advantageous, as microwave energy (300 W) will reach and bypass the boiling point of most solvents in a matter of seconds. Certified pressure vessels allow for greater use of the lower boiling point solvents that are normally ignored in conventional high-temperature reactions. For specific information on individual solvents, Chapter 2 provides tables and figures of pressures generated at specific temperatures for different volumes of 25 common solvents.

Table 28*High, Medium, and Low
absorbing solvents*

Absorbance Level	Solvents
High	DMSO; EtOH; MeOH; Propanols; Nitrobenzene; Formic Acid; Ethylene Glycol
Medium	Water; DMF; NMP; Butanols; Acetonitrile; HMPA; Methyl Ethyl Ketone, Acetone, and other ketones; Nitromethane; o-Dichlorobenzene; 1,2-Dichloroethane; 2-Methoxyethanol; Acetic Acid; Trifluoroacetic Acid
Low	Chloroform; Dichloromethane; Carbon Tetrachloride; 1,4-Dioxane, THF, Glyme, and other ethers; Ethyl Acetate; Pyridine; Triethylamine; Toluene; Benzene; Chlorobenzene; Xylenes; Pentane, Hexane, and other hydrocarbons

General synthetic organic chemistry rules still apply with microwave-assisted chemical reactions. Regardless of the kind of reaction performed, the type of solvent for each remains the same. There are protic and aprotic solvents, and each of these may or may not be applicable for certain kinds of chemistry. Protic solvents have the ability to solvate or interact with both cations and anions, whereas aprotics can only solvate cations. The solvents of each type are interspersed throughout Table 28.

III. Temperature, Time, and Power

Once the solvent has been chosen or you have decided to go solvent-free, it is time to design the reaction method. There are three important variables to think about: temperature, irradiation time, and power. These parameters are presented in sequential boxes on the flow chart for each reaction type. They will vary with solvent selection and the choice of open or closed vessel conditions. We are all very familiar with temperature and time, as these dictate how we run conventional reactions. Power, however, is a new variable to consider in microwave-enhanced reactions. It is also probably the most important, but I will discuss this last.

As a traditional organic chemist, you are most concerned about the temperature of your reaction. In microwave reactions performed in pressure vessels (both with and without solvent), the best place to start is ten degrees above the temperature used in the conventional method. If you have chosen to do atmospheric work, follow the left side of Chart 1 according to whether or not you are using solvent. For solvent-free reactions (use of mineral oxides), you could start around 200 °C, *but I would not go above 250 °C, as these reaction mixtures will heat quickly.* For reactions in solvent, you will have to decide

Solvents will reach temperatures that are 10-20 degrees above their boiling points in atmospheric microwave-assisted reactions.

whether you are going to reflux or work with sub-boiling conditions. Set the temperature at least 50 degrees above the boiling point for reflux conditions. Solvents will reach temperatures that are 10-20 degrees above their boiling points in atmospheric

microwave-assisted reactions. Setting a high temperature will also ensure a high, constant power level for direct molecular heating. In addition, remember to allow enough head space in your round-bottom flask for

rapidly boiling reaction mixtures. It is also wise to use reflux condensers that are at least one foot in length, as solvents at temperatures above their boiling points will rapidly climb the height of the condenser. For sub-boiling temperatures, mimic the conventional method. Begin with the same temperature that you would normally use on the hotplate.

Deciding on how long to run a microwave reaction also depends on the type of reaction being performed. A good starting point for pressurized reactions (both with or without solvent) is 5-10 minutes. I would also use a 5-10 minute reaction time for reactions performed on mineral oxides. For solution phase atmospheric work, use the following reference chart to begin:

<u>Conventional</u>	<u>Microwave</u>
4 hrs	10 min
8-18 hrs	30 min
> 18 hrs	1 hr

The amount of power being applied to a microwave reaction is very important. Obviously, a low power level might not provide successful results, yet excessive power may cause decomposition. We already know that 300 W of microwave energy will reach and bypass the boiling point of most solvents in a matter of seconds, but do we always need this maximum power value with every reaction? The answer is no. Remember, organic reactions contain many different reagents and catalysts. Their presence can drastically enhance the coupling efficiency of a reaction mixture, regardless of solvent. In addition, many reagents and products are very sensitive to high temperatures and decompose readily. Applying a lower power for a selected amount of time at a certain temperature can sometimes be more effective.

Some microwave systems require the user to program the power parameter. For those that do, this paragraph

is important for method development. In a closed reaction, a vessel failure can occur if the pressure rises too quickly because of abundant microwave energy. How do you know the right power level? With any new reaction, especially if you are unsure about how it will react in a microwave, you should start with 50 W. You will know instantly (ca. 5-10 sec) whether it is enough. If your reaction is struggling to reach its designated temperature, then you will have to increase the power. For open vessel, solvent-free reactions, I would start in the 25-50 W range. For refluxing under atmospheric conditions, this is one example where 250-300 W is necessary. A high power level will ensure that there is always constant microwave power being applied, and will keep your reaction mixture at its maximum attainable temperature. Finally, when mimicking conventional methods and working with sub-boiling temperatures, start with 100 W.

High energy is the reason microwaves are so beneficial to organic synthesis and why they have produced such dramatically favorable results. The energy transfer

Simultaneous cooling of the reaction vessel during a reaction can dramatically improve the product yield of some reactions.

in a microwave-assisted reaction is incredibly quick, as energy is transferred every nanosecond it is applied. Conventional heating methods cannot do that. In a microwave reaction, as the temperature reaches the set value, the power is reduced so that the reaction mixture does not bypass that temperature point. It then stays at

a lower level in order to maintain the set temperature throughout the entire reaction. The power, or energy, is the most important variable in a microwave-enhanced reaction. Recent experimentation has shown that simultaneous cooling of the reaction vessel during a reaction will ensure a constant, high power level for direct molecular

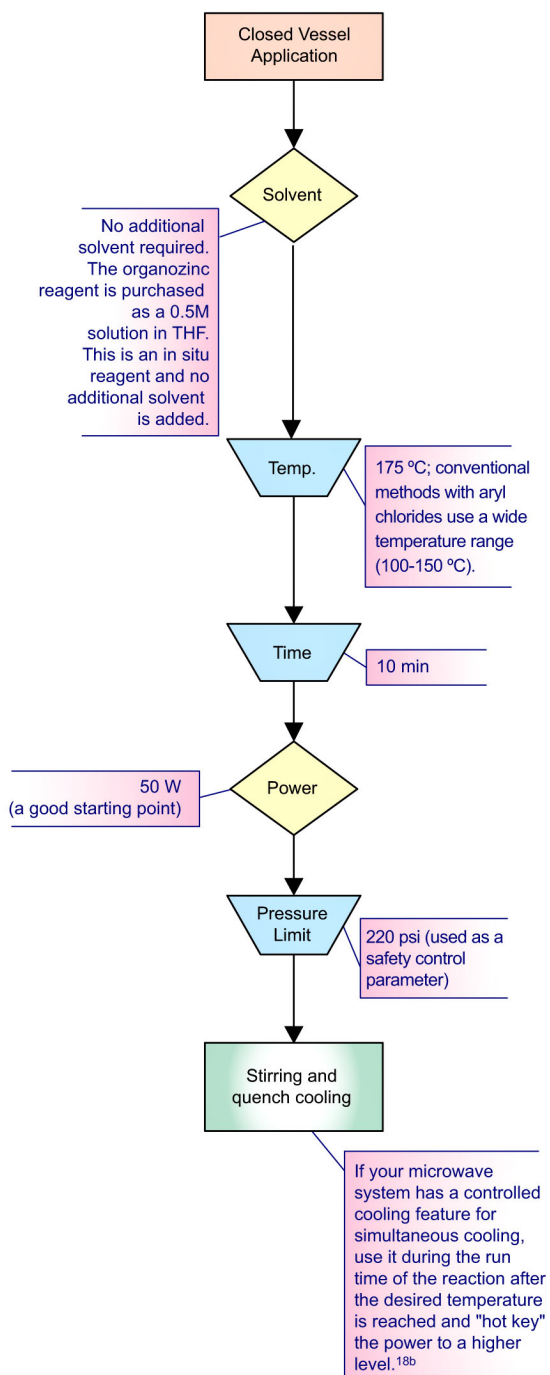
heating. *This has dramatically affected reaction rates and nearly doubled percent yields of some lower yielding reactions.*¹⁸ Simultaneous cooling can also be especially useful in reactions where the reagents and/or products are heat sensitive. If compressed air is introduced to the cavity while simultaneously applying microwave irradiation, the thermal heat will not accumulate in the reaction mixture. Large amounts of energy can still be applied, while the bulk temperature remains low. This cooling feature can be applied to both closed and open vessel reactions. If your microwave system has this controlled cooling feature, I would highly suggest implementing it in every method.

Optimization

If the first method you programmed worked for you and you are happy with the results, then great! However, what happens if your first method did not work and no product has formed? Or, what if your product yield is very low? This is where optimization comes in. First, we'll discuss ways in which you can optimize your method. Then, as an example, I will optimize both the closed-vessel Negishi reaction (Scheme 141) that is shown on Chart 2 and the open-vessel nucleophilic aromatic substitution (S_NAr) reaction (Scheme 142) shown on Chart 3.

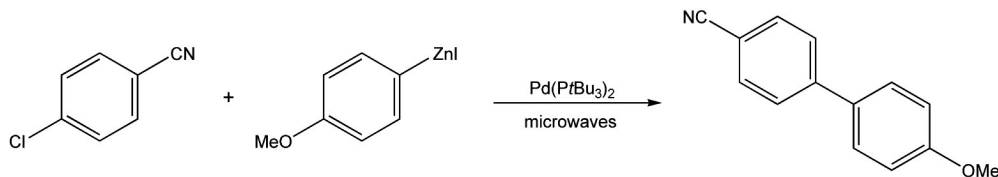
The first place that I would start when optimizing a closed-vessel method would be with the temperature parameter. As I previously mentioned, start ten degrees above the temperature used in the conventional method. Sequentially, increase the temperature to 25, 50, and 100 °C above the temperature in the conventional method. As long as you stay below the decomposition temperatures of heat-sensitive reagents, this should help you optimize your method. After finding the optimum temperature, you can then vary your reaction time to maximize product yield. Alternatively, if your

Chart 2



reaction is struggling to reach its designated temperature, then you will have to increase the power in small increments. If your microwave system has a controlled cooling feature for simultaneous cooling, use it during the run time of the reaction after the desired temperature is reached and “hot key” the power to a higher level.^{18b} When optimizing reaction conditions and programming methods, remember to change only one variable at a time, so when something is successful, you will know which parameter it was.

When first attempting a closed-vessel, microwave-assisted Negishi reaction (Scheme 141, Chart 2), I examined the procedure of the conventional method. This method uses a wide range of thermal temperatures (100–150 °C), so I used 160 °C (ten degrees above the conventional method) as my starting point (Power: 50 W; Reaction time: 10 min). Upon analysis, no product was detected. I performed three additional runs at 175, 210, and 240 °C. Product was present in all three, but the percent yield decreased as temperature increased. As the temperature was increased, the predominant species was a 4,4'-dimethoxybiphenyl byproduct. From the results of this experiment, I realized that I should keep the temperature of my reactions around 175 °C.

Scheme 141

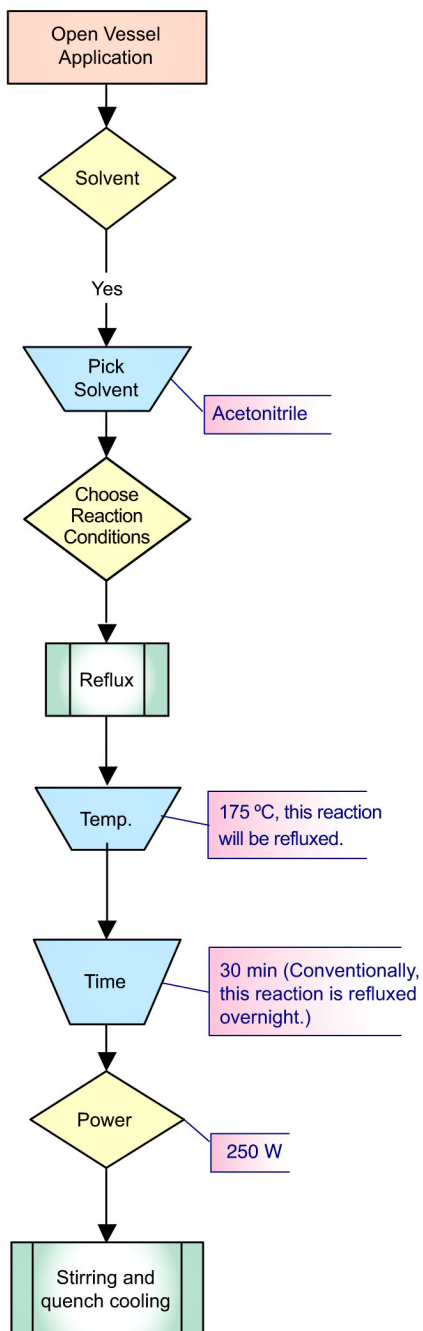
Once I figured out what temperature to run my Negishi reactions at, I then decided to experiment with reaction times. I ran a series of reactions at 175 °C (Power: 50 W) for 1, 5, 10, and 20 minutes. Upon analysis, I noticed considerable yield increases from one to five

minutes and then from five to ten minutes. When I ran the reaction for 20 minutes, I did not notice any significant increase in product yield. In fact, the yield of the biphenyl byproduct increased with this extended reaction time. Thus, the results indicated that holding the reaction for ten minutes at 175 °C was optimal.

All my reactions up to this point were run with an initial power input of 50 W. The reaction mixture was very polar and the temperature point was reached quickly. Once the temperature was reached, the power level decreased. After I determined the optimal reaction temperature and run time, I wanted to ensure a high, constant power level. This can help struggling reactants acquire enough energy for transformation into products. The microwave system used with these reactions had the controlled cooling feature for simultaneous cooling. Once the desired temperature of 175 °C was reached, I administered the cooling feature and “hot keyed” the power up to 80 W in five-watt increments.^{18b} In some Negishi reactions that were lower yielding, cooling helped immensely.

Reaction time is usually the main consideration when optimizing open-vessel microwave reactions. This is because the temperature of a particular reaction mixture can only go so high at atmospheric pressure. Conventionally, S_NAr reactions (Scheme 142, Chart 3) can require reflux conditions overnight, and sometimes, even 24 hours is needed. When I first attempted the reaction shown in the scheme, I chose to run it for 30 minutes. Equipping my instrument with a 1.5 foot reflux condenser, the following additional parameters were set: 250 W of power; 175 °C. Using acetonitrile (bp 82 °C) as my solvent, I set a high temperature to ensure a constant power level of 250 W. The temperature reached 95 °C after one minute and remained there for the duration of the reaction. Upon completion and analysis with GC/MS, I obtained my product in quantitative yield.

Chart 3



Scheme 142

Let's assume that this reaction had not worked and the starting materials were the only compounds recovered, or very little product was obtained. The first change I would make is to increase the reaction time. If there is no product present after the initial run period, I would double the reaction time. In this case, run the reaction for an additional 30 minutes, and reanalyze the resulting mixture. In situations where the product is beginning to show, but in very small amounts, I would increase the reaction time in 10-minute increments.

If increasing the reaction time is not solving the problem, then temperature can be optimized. However, the only way to do this is by changing the solvent. If you want to increase the bulk temperature of your reaction, you must choose a solvent with a higher boiling point. If this is the case, I refer you back to the second part of the method development section in this chapter. There are many different solvents to choose from and the reaction chemistry you are performing will dictate this choice. You may also opt to use simultaneous cooling, if your microwave instrumentation is equipped with this feature. It will allow you to apply up to 300 W of microwave energy to your reaction system, but the bulk temperature will remain low. In the case of the S_NAr reaction, I would have been able to apply 300 W to my reaction, but the overall temperature would have been much lower than 95 °C. Once again, remember to change only one variable at a time, so when something is successful, you will know which parameter it was.

Though this chapter was written with the intent of providing the reader with basic knowledge on getting

started using microwave instrumentation and some guidelines in designing and optimizing program methods, the best way to learn microwave synthesis is to actually do it. You cannot hurt the instrument, so be aggressive and innovative. Vessel failures are going to happen occasionally — it is OK! Just as you would do if a reaction flask exploded in your hood, pick up the pieces and move on. There is a completely new side of organic synthesis that is waiting to be discovered.



Chapter 6

Microwave Safety Considerations

Microwave safety may seem like a simple topic, but the rapid transfer of energy associated with microwave-enhanced chemistry does create safety issues. Is microwave irradiation safe? The answer is yes, but only with equipment that has been properly designed for its specific use. Closed vessel microwave systems have been in common use in laboratories since 1985. They have become the preferred

The best microwave safety device is a trained and knowledgeable operator.

method of sample preparation for many laboratory analyses. During that period, there have been documented cases of vessel failures. Reasons for these failures vary from exceeding the load limit of the vessel to using vessels well beyond their serviceable lifetime, or exceeding the pressure or temperature rating of the vessels. Frequently, such events are caused by the chemist being unfamiliar with the kinetics of the reaction. The best microwave safety device is a trained and knowledgeable operator. When performing microwave synthesis, a

chemist should also be aware of the equipment being used and the stability of solvents at high temperatures. This chapter discusses these issues in hopes of increasing microwave safety awareness.

I. Equipment

Using the correct hardware for microwave synthesis is imperative for personal safety. DO NOT PURCHASE A DOMESTIC MICROWAVE OVEN FROM AN APPLIANCE STORE! It may seem to be a more economical solution, but these ovens are not designed for the rigors of laboratory usage. There are no safety controls or monitoring of power, temperature, or pressure. Acids and solvents corrode the interiors quickly, and the cavities are not designed to withstand the resulting explosive force from a vessel failure in runaway reactions. In addition, safety interlocks have been compromised allowing the unit to continue producing microwave energy even though the door has been opened.

Using the correct hardware for microwave synthesis is imperative for personal safety.

The majority of the research discussed in the applications chapter has been executed in multi-mode domestic microwave ovens. In the 1980s, laboratory instrument companies began to address the specific microwave safety issues. These instruments featured corrosion-resistant stainless steel cavities with reinforced doors. In the event of a vessel failure, the vessel and its contents would be contained within the cavity. Venting mechanisms were added for vapor accumulation in order to prevent potential explosions. Power, temperature, and pressure monitoring, with automatic safety controls, were also installed.

Single-mode microwave instrumentation is now available. These cavities are designed to provide a more consistent energy distribution with reproducible,

stable energy patterns. The instruments are equipped with the same precautionary mechanisms as multi-mode cavities and both the temperature and pressure input values are used as safety parameters. Microwave power is automatically lowered just before either value is reached. Just as with any variable controller, power is cycled to maintain the operator-set parameter of pressure and/or temperature. Single-mode laboratory systems also act as a containment in the event of a vessel failure. The operator should always be sure to utilize the certified pressure tubes and accessories supplied by the

The operator should always be sure to utilize the certified pressure tubes and accessories supplied by the original manufacturer.

original manufacturer. Placing any item inside a microwave cavity, which has not been designed, tested, and certified for use in that specific cavity, most assuredly will result in a failure of the equipment and/or the reaction.

II. Chemical applications and safety

Another important safety issue in microwave synthesis is the actual chemistry being performed. The chemist must be aware of the potential kinetics of the reaction to be accomplished. They should also be aware of the stability of their reagents at high temperatures. Many solvents and reagents decompose to hazardous components from prolonged exposure to high temperatures. This information is provided in Section 10 (Stability and Reactivity) of the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for each chemical. Potentially risky chemistries include those that are also unsafe under conventional heating conditions. Both azide and nitro groups have been known to cause explosions with thermal heat. Precautions should be taken when using microwave irradiation with compounds containing

these functional groups. Additionally, any exothermic reaction should be treated carefully because of the fast energy transfer associated with microwave irradiation. An exothermic reaction is uncontrolled. It will only stop when the available fuels are expended. The production of pressure and heat happens at an alarmingly fast rate and can exceed the ability of the designed vent mechanisms on the vessel to safely relieve the condition. When this happens a vessel failure is imminent. A laboratory microwave system will contain the energy of the resulting failure. A well-designed system will not sustain damage. It will also be able to be cleaned and placed back into service in a matter of minutes.

A question that is always raised is whether transition metals can be used as catalysts in a microwave-assisted reaction. Absolutely! Microwave irradiation can greatly enhance organometallic reactions. When using a metal catalyst, only small amounts of ground material are needed, and this will not cause arcing within the microwave field. Conversely, metal filings and other ungrounded metals within the microwave field should be avoided, as they do provide a potential arc source.

Transition metals can be used as catalysts in microwave-assisted reactions.

Microwave chemists should also be aware of the potential for localized superheating. This can occur in a viscous sample when there is not proper stirring. When performing transition metal catalyzed reactions, a metallic coating on the vessel wall may result. The coating absorbs energy extremely well, heats quickly, and could melt the reaction tube. This can also occur in solvent-free reactions, especially when the reagents are adsorbed onto a mineral oxide. To reduce this occurrence, ensure adequate stirring with a heavier stir bar in pressurized reactions or with a mixer for open vessel, solvent-free experiments.

If you come away with one thing from this chapter, it should be to use equipment designed for the task and receive training on its utilization! Microwave irradiation provides more energy than thermal heat — there is no limit. If you are unsure about a particular reaction, then start small: use small amounts of reagents and start with a low power level and temperature. You can always increase the temperature or power level after observing the results. Work with chemicals in a laboratory hood to eliminate inhaling toxic fumes that can result from reagents and solvents exposed to high temperatures. Becoming familiar with microwave instrumentation and the hardware associated with it is also necessary. Used correctly, microwave technology provides a very safe way to perform chemistry, as the reaction vessel is more contained than when utilizing conventional heating methods.

Chapter 7

Microwave Hardware

The first microwave systems employed for laboratory applications were simple, inexpensive, domestic microwave ovens designed for home use. Creative chemists saw these devices as a cost-effective means to investigate the use of microwave energy to drive chemical reactions. These systems were commonly available, easy to operate, and due to their unsophisticated design, simple to modify for concept testing. For the most part, applications that required

Microwave instrumentation has evolved to include systems designed specifically to meet the needs of synthetic chemists.

long heating cycles or had high temperature needs under conventional methods, such as sample preparation for trace analysis, were explored first.

Results from the use of microwave energy to promote these applications were often promising, but with safety and hardware limitations. Namely, these systems were not designed for the harsh conditions encountered in the laboratory, nor did they permit the kind of flexibility in reaction handling and software programming necessary

to gain large scale use. The need for equipment specifically designed for the laboratory became more evident as experimentation with microwave-enhanced chemistry began to progress.

I. Multi-mode vs. Single-mode

The earliest attempts to design microwave-based laboratory instrumentation centered on the modification of domestic microwave ovens to enhance their ability to survive laboratory conditions. As such, multi-mode microwave applicators, the basic applicator used in domestic ovens, saw the earliest use in the laboratory. These applicators feature larger cavity geometries, which allow the processing of multiple samples simultaneously. Sample containers of various sizes and shapes from micro titer plates to large vessels, such as three L-flasks have been successfully used in multi-mode systems.

Multi-mode cavities, due to the physics of their design, have multiple pockets of energy dispersed throughout the cavity volume. Multiple energy pockets will have different levels of energy intensity, sometimes referred to as hot and cold spots. Therefore, any one sample may encounter an energy pocket of greater or lesser intensity than another if positioned statically in a multi-mode cavity. In order to provide an equal distribution of energy, multi-mode systems continuously rotate samples throughout the energy field. This tends to smooth or average the field exposure across all of the samples during the energy cycle.

For the organic chemist, microwave systems seem to provide an obvious resolution for the need to accelerate long, laborious reaction procedures. Medicinal chemists see microwave systems as a way to accelerate optimization protocols. However, it is the combinatorial chemist who greets the use of microwave chemistry most openly — as a way to increase reaction throughput in parallel

chemistry applications. In all cases, the use of multi-mode microwave systems has proven to be of limited advantage.

For organic and medicinal chemists, the lack of field homogeneity paired with the positional sensitivity of these systems produce results that are at once promising and distressing. Often reactions will show great improvements only to have reproduction of the result elude the investigator. For the combinatorial chemist, the combination of field inhomogeneity coupled with the differences in sample absorption characteristics make the control of chemistries conducted simultaneously in parallel formats difficult when diverse chemistries are attempted. Specifically, multi-mode systems become problematic for chemists trying to reproduce their reactions on a small scale. While the total power generated may be high in industrial multi-mode instruments (typically in the 1000 – 1200 W range), the power density of the field is quite low due to the total volume of the cavity (typically in the 0.025 – 0.040 W/mL range). Therefore, trying to heat the small individual samples characteristic of drug discovery or new chemistry research is difficult.

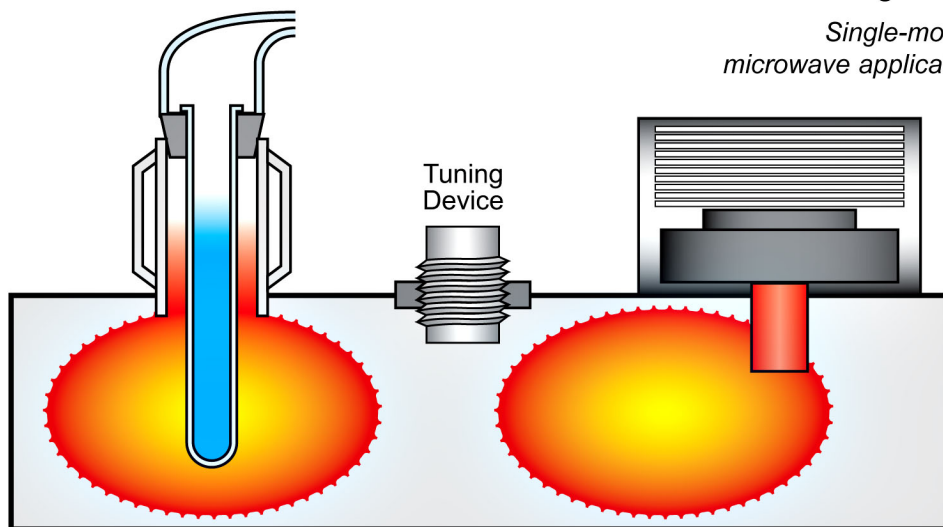
To combat the inherent difficulty with multi-mode technology, instrumentation manufacturers developed single-mode cavities with more consistent and predictable energy distribution.¹³ Single-mode instruments produce one homogenous, intense pocket of energy that is highly reproducible. Due to their uniform energy distribution and higher power density, these systems typically couple more efficiently with small samples. Although single-mode systems only output 300 – 400 W of power, their smaller cavity volume and single, focused energy pocket yield a field density in the 0.90 W/mL range.

Single-mode systems were not widely used, however, until recent advances in technology led to the development of instruments with the necessary features and software to be of use in organic synthesis laboratories. Chemists wanted the ability to perform elevated pressure and

atmospheric reactions. In addition, they needed a way to “tune” the instrument for particular applications, as changes in sample size or the physical coupling characteristics of the sample (i.e. polarity of the sample, conductive properties of the sample) can dramatically affect the ability of the applicator to couple with the sample. Only in the last few years have systems become available that either allow the user to tune the applicator or provide applicators that automatically tune to changing application needs.

The need to change the tuning of these cavities can be difficult if a chemist is processing several different types of samples concurrently. Figure 43 shows the side view of an older single-mode design. There is a rectangular waveguide (the microwave cavity), a power source, a sample

Figure 43
*Single-mode
microwave applicator*



positioned at a maximized energy point from the magnetron, and some type of mechanical tuning device in the system that will adjust it for variations in the sample.^{8,12,722,723}

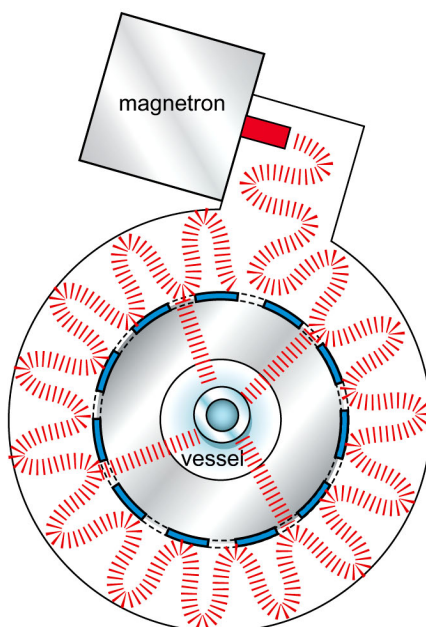
Due to recent advances in single-mode microwave technology, systems now offer greater flexibility to the

organic chemist. In addition to the traditional rectangular waveguide style applicator, a circular waveguide capable of self-tuning is now available (Figure 44, top view). This applicator features multiple entry points for the microwave energy to enter the cavity, compensating for variations in the coupling characteristics of the sample, the physical size of the sample, and the geometrical placement of the sample in the cavity. This design feature effectively renders the cavity immune to tuning issues.

The circular waveguide design also equates to a larger volume than preceding single-mode designs, offering flexibility in terms of sample volume. It can accept sample containers ranging from 1 mL up to 125 mL in size. Using infrared thermometry technology, this system allows volumes as low as 100 μL in specially designed pressure tubes. Additionally, it can be used with open vessels for performing traditional atmospheric work. This provides an open system in which the

Figure 44

*Self-tuning single-mode
microwave applicator*



chemist can add reagents to the sample while it refluxes. This technology has incorporated all of the desirable capabilities of conventional heating methods into a microwave system while also offering the benefits of greatly increased reaction times and improved yields.

III. Pressurized and Atmospheric hardware

Most single-mode applicators permit the use of sealed vials to perform elevated pressure reactions. As previously mentioned, the circular waveguide design can also perform reactions at atmospheric pressure. This applicator design employs two different sized attenuators (or doors), one to use with pressure tubes and another that will fit around the necks of round-bottom flasks. This configuration allows the operator to choose the glassware to fit a specific application need.

Most systems incorporate the use of 10-mL pressure vials and are preferably capped with self-sealing septa. These systems monitor the reaction conditions, and offer feedback control of the power input based on this monitored information. The available systems offer two pressure sensor design philosophies, direct and indirect measurement. Direct pressure measurement inserts a needle probe into the septum of the reaction tube. It has the benefit of fast response time, allowing a precise control of the reaction environment. The disadvantage to the direct method is that the pressure in the vessel must be lowered before the cover may be removed. This typically takes about one minute from the completion of a run. With the indirect method, the deflection of the septum is measured and related to the internal pressure of the vial. This is beneficial when working with highly corrosive reagents, as there is no septum penetration, but it does present some lag time in the measurement.

Using the circular waveguide design, atmospheric reactions can be done in standard round-bottom flasks up to 125 mL in size and with neck joint sizes of 24/40

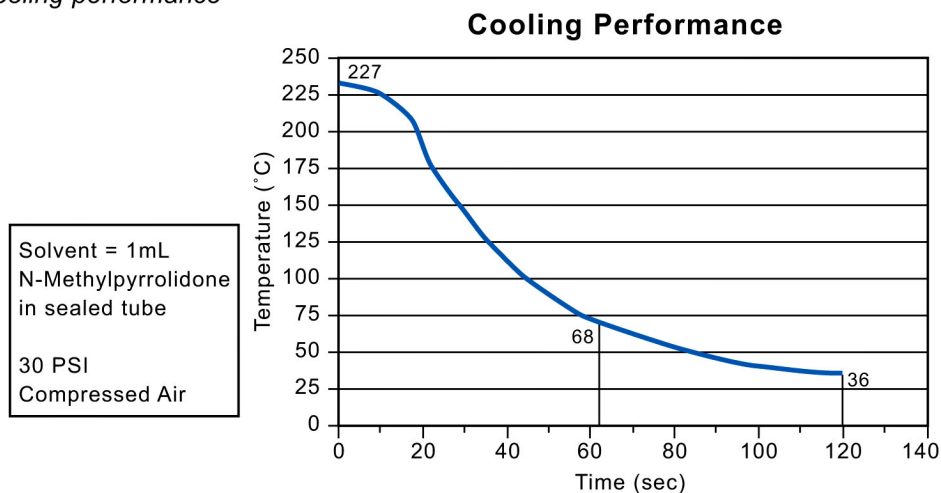
and smaller. Reflux condensers, addition funnels, Dean-Stark traps, or any other glass apparatus that is needed can be used. Depending on the type of reaction you are doing and the temperatures that are needed, atmospheric conditions may be the method of choice. Microwave organic reactions performed under atmospheric conditions may not produce the enhancements seen with pressurized vessels, but they can give reaction rates that are 10x faster than conventional methods and have the advantage of offering chemists the opportunity to increase the scale of the reaction.

IV. Cooling

Microwave irradiation can take reactions up to extremely high temperatures. Some single-mode systems include a cooling feature that allows for fast reaction quenching as compressed gas is forced into the reaction cavity. As the gas expands, it cools the atmosphere inside the cavity. The accelerated cooling profile reduces side reactions and provides for cleaner chemistries, resulting in less post-reaction workup (Figure 45).

Figure 45

Cooling performance



Some systems also have the ability to activate the cooling feature during reactions to control bulk temperature rise. This can be especially useful in reactions where the reagents and/or products are heat sensitive. If compressed air is introduced into the cavity while simultaneously applying microwave irradiation, thermal heat will not accumulate in the reaction mixture. Large amounts of energy can still be applied while the bulk temperature remains low, resulting in higher product yields and cleaner chemistries for many reactions.

V. Automation

Some single-mode systems are automated for increased throughput and unattended operation. As the typical reaction times are short (2-10 minutes), an automated sequential procedure allows for total reaction control and optimization while approaching parallel throughput results. The practice of High Throughput Sequential Chemistry (HTSC) allows for the ultimate in reaction optimization as the individual parameters of each reaction may be modified during the process to promote the most advantageous result.

As opposed to traditional parallel synthesis, where the reaction conditions are held constant for a parallel batch of chemistries, HTSC offers the chemist complete control over every step of each reaction in an optimization procedure, a feat that was too time-consuming and labor-intensive to be realistically attainable before. Automated formats permit the best practice of HTSC, as an entire library may be generated unattended with completely different reaction protocols within the same timeframe as traditional parallel schemes. Increased diversity and control without limited throughput make automated systems a popular choice with many chemists.

Afterword

Future Trends

At present, microwave synthesis is a fledgling science. However, its acceptance and evolution are progressing at a furious rate. Thus, it can be assumed that this shift to the application of microwave synthesis will only increase in the next few years. Instrument manufacturers are teaming with academic and industrial trailblazers in an effort to design and build affordable, flexible instrumentation. Hands-on application of these devices has resulted in and will continue to encourage innovative advances in the instruments, as well as an expanding applications and knowledge base. These factors will contribute to

Advantages of Microwave Synthesis

- *faster reactions*
- *higher yields*
- *cleaner reactions*
- *new pathways*
- *green chemistry*

the rapid expansion, evolution and adoption of the technology.

I. Expanding use and range of applications

Considered exotic and out of place, microwave instruments were first used in the analytical laboratory only for the most difficult sample types. Today, microwave energy is a broad-based replacement for conventional heating methods. Standard analytical methods are developed and written around microwave laboratory equipment. Much as the analytical laboratory embraced microwave instruments in the mid-1980s, the pharmaceutical lab is beginning to use them as the primary and preferred way to perform chemical synthesis. Most of the major pharmaceutical companies are currently evaluating, or have already begun to shift toward, microwave synthesis for their drug discovery and development efforts. Should the current trend of adoption continue, in just over 3 years, as many as 50% of all medicinal chemists will be using microwave synthesis for most of their reactions. Biotechnology companies and academic institutions are also rapidly adopting microwave irradiation in their synthetic projects. The increasing number of publications on microwave synthesis is further evidence that the technology is rapidly becoming an accepted methodology within the synthetic community.

The speed and simplicity of microwave synthesis provides exciting new opportunities for performing laboratory experiments. Historically, most of the academic work has been done in Europe, but this is changing as a number of the major synthetic groups in the United States are now starting to use microwave synthesis in their research. As often happens with important, new technology, universities with strong science programs are beginning to include it in graduate research and undergraduate teaching programs to expose students to microwave synthesis as early as possible. One major university in the United States is currently investigating

the use of microwave instrumentation in their undergraduate teaching curriculum and expects to initiate a pilot program within the next year.

II. Proteomic and genomic applications

Many expect microwave synthesis to find major applications in proteomics and genomics. As described and demonstrated in Chapter 5, the ability to simultaneously cool a reaction while applying microwave energy to the reactants offers the possibility of synthesizing large protein molecules. These molecules are very temperature sensitive. Typically, reaction times are quite long to insure the integrity of the molecules. Microwave energy rapidly drives these reactions through direct molecular heating. When coupled with cooling the bulk temperature of the reactants is kept low. Even with substantial microwave energy input (25 - 100 W, 6 - 24 cal/sec), reaction temperatures can be held between 30 - 40 °C.

Although not yet demonstrated, microwave synthesis also has the potential to be useful in the PCR (polymerase chain reaction) process, used for amplifying DNA fragments. Thermal cycling with conductive heat could be replaced with a microwave “electronic cycling” process. The microwave energy can easily be cycled in milliseconds, which — when combined with continuous cooling — could reduce cycle times by 100- to 1000-fold (minutes to milliseconds).

III. Scaling up reactions with flow-through systems

One application that is on the immediate horizon for microwave technology is flow-through synthesis. This allows for the constant reaction of the components, and therefore, the continuous on-line production of material. Flow-through systems based on multi-mode technology have had some success in the past in other

analytical application areas. Typically, the technology has proven sound, but its deployment has failed to meet the needs of the synthetic chemist. Single-mode applicators with flow cells are proving to be a better match of technology with user need, because they have the ability to provide production amounts of material in smaller, simpler devices. Capital outlays and safety concerns are both minimized, and switching over from one process to another is cleaner, quicker, and less waste intensive. Single-mode-based flow module testing is underway at several industrial sites where microwave instrumentation suppliers have partnered with industrial producers to define platform options.

The use of microwave technology in this manner will offer a rapid means of production for bulk amounts of material. Flow-through systems will provide the pharmaceutical laboratory with a methodology to produce large quantities of final products. As a result, the process chemist will have access to all of the enhancements of microwave synthesis without having to forfeit the scale of material production needed to supply the marketplace.

Microwave synthesis is a breakthrough technology for chemistry: an idea whose time has come. Its use has become more widespread, and as the technology continues to rapidly evolve, microwave synthesis will have a dramatic impact on the world of chemistry.



Glossary

Activation energy – The energy barrier that must be overcome in order for a chemical transformation to occur. Higher activation energy transformations, which are difficult or impossible to complete with conventional heating, can be done with microwave irradiation because the energy transfer is more efficient.

Arrhenius equation ($k = Ae^{-E_a/RT}$) – The relationship between the rate constant, the activation energy, and the temperature of a particular reaction. The rate constant (k) is dependent on two factors: the frequency of collisions between molecules that have the correct geometry for a reaction to occur (A) and the fraction of those molecules that have the minimum energy required to overcome the activation energy barrier ($e^{-E_a/RT}$). Microwave irradiation provides enhanced reaction rates (and rate constants), which are a result of the higher instantaneous temperatures caused by the rapid energy transfer.

Atmospheric reactions (open-vessel) - Reactions performed in standard glassware at atmospheric pressure. The bulk temperature is limited to 10-20 degrees above the atmospheric boiling point of the solvent. Microwave irradiation can enhance the reaction rates of these reactions by up to 10-fold. They can be equipped with reflux condensers, Dean-Stark traps, addition funnels, or any other glass apparatus that is needed.

Attenuator – A mechanical device used to block the passage of microwave irradiation. In some laboratory microwave systems, it is a cylindrical opening that allows access to the microwave chamber. The height of the cylinder must be 2.5 times the diameter to provide a sufficient barrier.

Conductive heating – Traditional method to perform thermally-assisted chemical reactions. Heat is applied externally and must first pass through the walls of the reaction vessel and the solvent. It is characterized as being slow and inefficient.

Cool reactions – The term used to describe microwave reactions performed at lower temperatures. The use of transparent (nonpolar) solvents and/or simultaneous cooling helps to minimize bulk heating. Recent experimentation has shown that simultaneous cooling of the reaction vessel during a reaction will ensure a constant, high power level for direct molecular heating. It also allows efficient transformations of larger, heat sensitive compounds (e.g. proteins) without causing sample degradation.

Dielectric constant (ϵ') – Also known as relative permittivity, it is the measure of a substances ability to store electric charges. It is dependent on both temperature and frequency.

Dielectric loss (ϵ'') – Also known as complexed permittivity. The amount of input microwave energy that is lost to the sample by being dissipated as heat. It is this value that best provides the organic chemist with the coupling efficiency of a particular solvent.

Dipole moment – The measure of the permanent polarity of a molecule.

IMS frequencies – Four microwave frequencies that have been reserved for industrial, medical, and scientific applications. These frequencies are 915, 2450, 5800, and 22,125 MHz. The 2450 MHz frequency is currently the only one used for laboratory synthesis.

Kinetic product – The product that has a higher rate of formation because of lower activation energy. This is generally the preferred product at lower temperatures.

Magnetron – An electromagnetic device that generates microwaves at a fixed frequency. The most common frequency is 2450 MHz, which is currently used in all laboratory microwave instrumentation.

Microwave coupling – The direct transfer of microwave energy to a substance, resulting in instantaneous heating.

Microwave heating – Direct energy transfer from the microwaves to the interacting substances. This causes kinetic excitation, which results in chemical transformations and secondary heating. It is characterized by rapid and efficient energy transfer.

Microwave irradiation – A form of electromagnetic energy that falls in the frequency range of 0.3 to 300 GHz. It is a low energy, non-ionizing radiation that transfers energy by interacting with polar substances.

Molecular heating – The term used to describe the direct energy transfer from microwaves to the molecules being heated. The speed and efficiency of this energy transfer is the reason for the greatly enhanced chemical transformations seen with microwave irradiation.

Multi-mode cavity – Large chambers that are used in domestic microwave ovens and various laboratory systems. They are large enough to propagate multiple modes of microwave energy (typically 20 - 30), which interact with each other constructively and destructively and create “hot spots” and “cold spots”. Uniform heating typically requires sample rotation throughout the energy field.

Nonpolar solvents – Solvents with small dipole moments that heat poorly or not at all with applied microwave energy. They are considered low absorbers and have dielectric losses (ϵ'') < 1.0 .

Polar solvents – Solvents with large dipole moments that heat efficiently with applied microwave energy. They are considered medium or high absorbers and have dielectric losses (ϵ'') between 1.0 - 50.

Pressurized reactions (closed-vessel) – Reactions performed in 10-mL reaction tubes that are capped with self-sealing septa. This allows reagents and solvents to be heated above their normal boiling points. Microwave irradiation is ideal for performing pressurized reactions because of the rapid energy transfer and instantaneous heating that occurs. Chemical reaction rates can be enhanced by as much as 1,000-fold.

Reaction intermediates – Reactive species that are temporarily formed in chemical transformations. These intermediates are usually very polar and can interact directly with microwaves if they are long-lived ($> 10^{-9}$ seconds).

Reaction rate – The speed at which reactants are transformed into product(s). It is a function of temperature and concentration of reactants. The rapid energy transfer and high instantaneous temperatures from microwave irradiation can increase reaction rates 10 - 1,000-fold.

Single-mode cavity – A small chamber of various geometries (circular, rectangular, etc.) that is sized such that it will only propagate one mode of microwave energy. This creates a more homogenous energy distribution and a much higher power density than multi-mode cavities.

Tangent delta (δ) - Also known as loss tangent, it is the ratio of the dielectric loss (ϵ'') to the dielectric constant (ϵ') [$\tan \delta = \epsilon''/\epsilon'$]. It is a measure of the ability of a substance to convert electromagnetic energy into heat at a given frequency and temperature.

Thermodynamic product – The more stable reaction product. Formation of this product requires a larger activation energy and higher temperatures. Microwaves can cause a shift in product from kinetic to thermodynamic because of the more efficient energy transfer and high instantaneous temperatures.

Transition states – When two or more reactants come together with sufficient energy to overcome the activation barrier and exist in a transitory state prior to completion of the transformation. The lifetime of these transition states depends on their stability and can vary from 10^{-13} seconds (highly activated) to several seconds (resonance-stabilized). Since microwave energy is transferred at a rate of 10^9 seconds, it can directly interact with transition states that are longer-lived.



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